

# THE BLUEPRINT TO SUCCESS

**AS DESIGNED BY THE MASTER ARCHITECT**

FRANCIS OGUNLEYE

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# **DEDICATION**

To almighty Jehovah, the one who made it possible for me to be alive today. For the grace, Inspiration & Wisdom bestowed upon me during the period of writing this book.



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To all my siblings, my dear sisters and brothers, and nieces and nephews, you know I love you all.

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# INTRODUCTION

Fear limits you and your vision, it serves as blinders to what may just be a few steps down the road for you; I have come to understand that sometimes to grow you will face different challenges, which leaves you with a choice to either quit or go all the way through the storm, even though you are not sure what to expect on the other side. Most times challenges are opportunities to take a step backward and re-approach the challenges you are facing so you can come back better and stronger than before.

Everyone wants to experience success in this present-day world, where most people use success as a yardstick to compare their lives with others. Most times failure is inevitable, just as a staircase where you have to climb up from downstairs, there is no automatic means of finding yourself at the topmost stair without starting from the least. This is a perfect scenario as regards to what failure and success are all about. To succeed, you will have to pass through roadblocks, temporary defeats, and struggles to make a name for yourself.

Having experienced this at one point or the other in my own life, and have also seen lots of people share their stories about where they have started and challenges faced to reach where

they are today, I felt inspired to write this book to encourage people that no matter who you are or where you come from, never give up on your dream. Believe in the impossible to take steps of faith, which is the opposite of fear, to reach for the unknown, to understand that fear is temporary, to have control over your mind and use it as a weapon in the battleground; because when your mind is right, you can focus, make a decision, commit and make your dream come true.

Step by step, day by day, you will conquer all the obstacles and I believe this book will inspire you to never give up and be whom you are meant to be.

*“You need to realize sacrifice is the price one pays  
to be at the top” – Aaron Henry.*

# CHAPTER 1

## WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS?

Barriers are fences or obstacles that prevent movement or access, they are anything that makes it difficult for someone to do something especially to move from one point to another. Barriers can be a huge factor in determining our next stage in life. The biggest challenge for most people is how to take the next step or climb the ladder to the next level when they are stuck, the word stuck means you are doing the same thing over and over again, it could be marital life, business life, religious life, or any other area of your life. When you start a task usually there are lots of energy and passion you develop towards getting the job done, you start growing in confidence and feeling more comfortable in the job, usually, after a couple of months or within a year or two years you get stuck, thus most people ask this same question, how do they break this barrier, feeling, set back, lack of enthusiasm, or passion and move to the next phase? Usually, most people never break that barrier, and they get stuck in the same place doing the same thing over and over again.

I would like to share the amazing story of an Icon the famous Walter Elias “Walt” Disney who was an American entrepreneur, animator, voice actor and film producer. He was born on December 5, 1901, in Chicago's Hermosa neighborhood. He was the fourth son of Elias Disney's five

children. In 1906, when Disney was four, the family moved to a farm in Marceline, Missouri, where his uncle Robert had just purchased land. In Marceline, Disney developed his interest in drawing when he was paid to draw the horse of a retired neighborhood doctor.

He took art classes as a boy and got a job as a commercial illustrator at the age of 18. Disney became interested in animation, although he preferred drawn cartoons, with the assistance of a borrowed book on animation and a camera, he began experimenting at home. Disney moved to Hollywood in July 1923 although New York was the center of the cartoon industry, he was attracted to Los Angeles because his brother Roy was convalescing from tuberculosis there. He moved to California in the early 1920s and set up the Disney Brothers Studio with his brother Roy and Ub Iwerks, Walt developed the character Mickey Mouse in 1928, his first highly popular success; he also provided the voice for his creation in the early years

As a pioneer of the American animation industry, he introduced several developments in the production of cartoons, as a film producer, Disney holds the record for most Academy Awards earned by an individual, having won 22 Oscars from 59 nominations. He was presented with two Golden Globe Special Achievement Awards and an Emmy Award, in February 1960, Disney was inducted to the Hollywood Walk of Fame with two stars, one for motion pictures and the other for his television work, Mickey Mouse was given his star for motion pictures in 1978. Disney was also inducted into the Television Hall of Fame in 1986, the California Hall of Fame

in December 2006, and was the inaugural recipient of a star on the Anaheim walk of stars in 2014. The Walt Disney Family Museum records that he “along with members of his staff, received more than 950 honors and citations from throughout the world” among other honors. Several of his films are included in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress. Disney passed away from Lung cancer due to his smoking history at the age of 65 on December 15, 1966. - WIKIPEDIA.

The story of this man says it all, he never gave up, even though he did not know what the future will hold for him he kept working on his skills and talents, he relocated from one state to another away from his comfort zone, through his journey he made history, provided jobs for millions of people all over the world and became a popular household name till date. You have to keep growing, reach for the unknown and become whom you are created to be.

*“If I may ask, do you even have core values? What are your core values? What's your mission statement? That's what people want to know when they get closer to you. Your core values are expressions of what to expect from you, it tells your boundaries, beliefs, what you will and won't do, things that have defined you, educated you and trained you. You have to spend more time thinking about your core values than your advantages.”—TD JAKES*

You need to realize that some people in your camp may not understand your dreams. If they do not get or try to talk you out of it that might be an indication that you've outgrown them. Stop wasting your time trying to explain your purpose to

everyone, it's only for you. Keep focused on the task at hand and let your success translate your testimony. Although sometimes things happen that can make you stuck in life till you get angry and it becomes very challenging, you have to be determined and say to yourself, enough is enough, thus, the challenge for many of us is that we tend to accommodate inconvenience for so long all because we do not want to leave our comfort zone, we need something to stretch us, for example when an elastic band is extremely stretched most of the time it doesn't get back to its normal position, therefore most times when life will stretch you way beyond your comfort zone, It brings forth change in you, from struggles to success, from pain to comfort, from lack to more than enough, from disappointments to blessings, from down to up, from left to right, you need to give more room for growth, you need to accommodate those inconvenience even though it is never easy, although the pain and suffering may be much, remember pain comes in the night but joy comes in the morning.

*“All life demands struggle. Those who have everything given to them become lazy, selfish, and insensitive to the real values of life. The very striving and hard work that we so constantly try to avoid is the major building block in the person we are today.” – Pope Paul VI*

I have come to realize there are lots of people struggling out there who are very wise, they make a speech no one quotes, they sing a song no one sing, they have a style no one adopts, whereas people on top like the rich, famous, influential and the powerful enjoy all these benefits.

I remember the story of the king of Pop Music Michael Jackson

who sold millions of records worldwide, he inspired generations of Pop, Soul, R&B artists with his music style and dance moves, the whole world hailed him when they saw him perform his first moonwalk, which was a dance style adopted by hundreds of thousands of people today, but the most surprising thing is that he did not originate the moonwalk, he saw some boys making those moves on the street and learned it from them, he then performed the moonwalk for the world to see at one of his concerts, the opportunity those people did not have. He turned a mere dance moves into a global dance moves, he took something from down to the top, he took a poor man's wisdom and used it to his advantage.

*“Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable... Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.” – Martin Luther King, Jr.*

# THE BLUEPRINT TO SUCCESS



# CHAPTER 2

## REACHING FOR THE UN-KNOWN

Until you take a step, face your biggest challenges, overcome your fears and oppositions you will never win. I will like to share a story of the most successful performer of all time Michael Jackson, who stepped into the unknown. Sometimes ago when I read his story I realized starting at the age of eleven, he had no time to be a child and found himself so lonely, during this period he lost happiness somewhere in his childhood and spent his life trying to go back and find it, throughout his career. He never got the chance to grow up like a normal child. Everything Jackson wanted to do as a child came to life as he became an adult, he grew to become the most successful entertainer of all time according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

*“He broke several limitations such as race, culture, background, and sacrifice of his childhood dreams to attain success, he has a vision, work towards that vision and became the world best, he gained respect from many people globally, in fact, he forever lives in the hearts of all that loves and respect his short time on earth.” – Sturgis.*

Most times until you take a step of faith you will never realize what is on the other side, you need to remember you do not need all the details to step out in faith and take a step from your

comfort zone because if you have all the fact you do not need any faith, thus you have to get out without everything, if you have the boldness to step in the unknown doors will open that could have never been opened on your own, the right people will show up and you will have the funds and resources that you need in the long run.

Let me give you a scenario, if you are using a GPS navigational system as a guide you cannot pull over if your destination is still a couple of miles ahead, you have to keep driving and as you go further you get closer to your destination, thus if you are waiting on all the details you will be waiting your whole life. When confusion sets in and you do not know which direction to go, just like a GPS which can be used to search different route you will need to search your heart and set an intention for your heart's desire, then, put your attention on your intention. Only your heart has answers you cannot get from anywhere else. Only your heart knows what is right for you, what is good for you, and what is best for you. Ask in your own heart about these things for which there seems to be no answer.

Usually, you need to know that as you are growing you need to keep the momentum going, everyone you meet in life has something to teach you but make sure you're not being held back for too long because if you refuse to learn that lesson the first time, life will challenge you, life will test you and teach you some lessons, when you climb up that ladder you need to drop some baggage and realize although some people are in your life however they weren't intended to go with you, There's no longer a need to accommodate people you've outgrown so

stop prolonging their expired time with you because some of the people you have on your side aren't effective anymore they've surpassed their point of productivity. The longer you allow them to hang around the higher the probability they'll drain you down to nothing. Don't allow your strength, abilities & blessings to be drained by people past their season, sometimes the right people can't enter your life unless you relieve unproductive people of their duties. Therefore, to elevate there must be something you eliminate because you can't soar carrying the weight of previous levels, you have to be careful of whom you bring to your breakthrough, not everyone is meant to graduate with you. Although as you are stretching you feel uncomfortable and healthy tension arises, you have to strive, work, even though you are not sure how it will work out, that's when you are growing, that's when you need to keep the momentum going, and finally, when you get to that destination, all the lessons you have learned along the way can apply and even grow further.

*“What we can or cannot do, what we consider possible or impossible, is rarely a function of our true capability. It is more likely a function of our beliefs about who we are.” – Anthony Robbins*

*“I've learned that fear limits you and your vision. It serves as blinders to what may be just a few steps down the road for you. The journey is valuable, but believing in your talents, your abilities, and your self-worth can empower you to walk down an even brighter path. Transforming fear into freedom - how great is that?” – Soledad O'Brien*

I would like to share the inspiring story of one of the most

successful African American Hollywood Actor Tyler Perry, a writer, actor, producer, director who was born September 13, 1969, in New Orleans, Louisiana. As a child, he endured years of physical and emotional abuse by his father, who was prone to violent outbursts especially when he drank, even at one point, Perry attempted suicide in an effort to escape his difficult situation. At 16, he changed his first name to Tyler to separate himself from his father. Perry dropped out of high school, but he eventually earned a general equivalency diploma, or GED, later. Trying to find his way professionally, he held a series of unfulfilling jobs before discovering his true passion. Perry was ready to give up on his dream. For years, he had poured his passion and money into performances of his first play, "I Know I've Been Changed", always hoping that this would be the one that drew a crowd. But "every time I would go out to do the show, it would fail," says Perry "I would go to my boss and say, 'I need time off to do the show.' And they'd say no. I'd go to my desk, I'd sit, and I'd pray. God would say, 'Leave. Quit.' I'd hear the voice as clear as day. I would leave, do the shows, and they would not work. I'd pray again: 'God, where are you? You told me to leave.' And I wouldn't hear a thing. "But he stuck with the play because he knew he was on to something. "The work was about adult survivors of child abuse and how one character confronted their abuser and went on to have a better life," says Perry.

Disappointed yet determined, Perry continued to work odd jobs while reworking the show. He staged the show in several other cities, but success still eluded him. Broke, Perry was living out of his car for a time. "Can you imagine a six-foot-five man sleeping in a Geo Metro?" he once told *Essence* magazine. In

1998, Perry tried one more time to win over theater audiences. He rented out the House of Blues in Atlanta for another production of *I Know I've Been Changed*. Soon Perry was performing to sell-out crowds and the musical was moved to a larger theater. After so many years of hard work, he finally earned critical acclaim as well as commercial success. – [covenantrelationships.org](http://covenantrelationships.org)

You cannot play it safe your whole life and reach the fullness of your destiny, you will never know unless you try, when you come to the end of your life, will you have more regrets from the risk you took or the ones you didn't, thus when you find yourself in situation you think you can't contain, it means you are being stretched and the unexpected is about to happen.

Most times the miracles happen along the way, but remember if you step into the unknown, things will happen, therefore never be reluctant to walk into new seasons only because the outcome is unknown, stop, don't keep your transition into a new life just because you are too busy looking backward, trust me, the view behind you will not change not even in time. Thus, the moment your cloud moves so should you because that covering is an ordered step, get back to your covering, when your season changes so do the climate, don't get burned out looking backward.

It's good to know that very often we feel extremely comfortable in our circle, we don't want to take that step, we keep saying to ourselves in silence, what if it doesn't work out, but the truth is, are you going to talk yourself out of it? Are you going to let the fear of what you can't see hold you back? Will you rather be bold and step into the unknown? You need to realize the

unknown is where breakthrough and miracles happen, in the unknown, you discover talents and abilities you didn't know you have, in the unknown you tend to accomplish more than you have dreamed, remember you don't have to be too familiar with the details, because sometimes too much familiarity can keep you from your destiny, what you are used to, how you were raised, the job you have been doing for years, therefore when the time comes for you to move forward, you have to accomplish that mission with faith, because the only way things which are behind you can catch up with you is because you are no longer moving forward, remember looking back, makes you smart. Looking forward makes you mature. Looking down makes you wise. Looking up makes you strong. You need to understand that there is a reason why you have not waved the flag of surrender yet, it's because you can't fight destiny, therefore don't crash into old habits you have invited back into your life, they are behind you for a reason.

# CHAPTER 3

## POWER OF POSITIVE THINKING

Am sure you have heard of the phrase that “our thoughts somehow shape the reality we experience” Negative thought influence the world around us and bring about negative circumstances, while positive thoughts bring about positive circumstances. Thus you need to realize the old you will do anything In its power to prevent change, it will come up with all the excuses as to why you should make a move and step into the next phase of your life and realize that the old you is very comfortable in its comfort zone, this is why change is very difficult and this is one of the reasons positive thinking always fails, therefore what you believe determines what comes to existence in your life.

*“Work hard for what you want because it won't come to you without a fight. You have to be strong and courageous and know that you can do anything you put your mind to. If somebody puts you down or criticizes you, just keep on believing in yourself and turn it into something positive.”*

*– Leah LaBelle*

You deserve to be happy and live the kind of life you have always dreamed of, in fact, you must believe you deserve to be happy, because most people do have a pang of un-conscious guilt about being happy and they need to let it go from the sub-

conscious once and for all, this feeling usually is due to the fear of the price they need to pay for success and thus they become very scared of it, without realizing these are false perceptions because happy is not what they deserve, happiness is simply a state of mind.

*“I truly believe that everything that we do and everyone that we meet is put in our path for a purpose. There are no accidents; we're all teachers - if we're willing to pay attention to the lessons we learn, trust our positive instincts and not be afraid to take risks or wait for some miracle to come knocking at our door.” – Marla Gibbs*

You need to understand that failure to control your thought process can simply affect the process of positive thinking, your actions are due to what's in your heart, whatever is in your life you have to make a choice to become whatever you choose to be because no one can make you feel bitter, no one can make you a failure, no one can make you climb a mountain of success, all you need to do is to make a choice and be whom you are created to be. “The first step is to say that you can!” (Will Smith). According to many scientists who have studied the human mind we were made to understand that the human mind is a battlefield therefore if you never change your way of thinking you can never change your way of living, if you want to live a successful and quality life you must have a quality mind, thus, from your mind learn to harness the power of imagination and try to visualize what it is that you want to do, you have to take action and start moving towards your goal, you need to realize that your mission is to be the best version of yourself and make positive changes every day to make your



life look amazing.

*“Successful people maintain a positive focus in life no matter what is going on around them. They stay focused on their past successes rather than their past failures, and on the next action steps they need to take to get them closer to the fulfillment of their goals rather than all the other distractions that life presents to them.” – Jack Canfield*

You need to take ownership and responsibility for your life, if not somebody else will take control and dictate your destiny.

*"Arnold! Arnold!"*

*"I can still hear them, the voices of my friends, the lifeguards, bodybuilders, the weightlifters, booming up from the lake where they were working out in the grass and trees.*

*"Arnold—come on!" cried Karl, the young doctor who had become my friend at the gym...*

*It was the summer I turned fifteen, a magical season for me because that year I'd discovered exactly what I wanted to do with my life. It was more than a young boy's mere pipe dream of a distant, hazy future—confused fantasies of being a fireman, detective, sailor, test pilot, or spy. I knew I was going to be a bodybuilder. It wasn't simply that either. I would be the best bodybuilder in the world, the greatest, the best-built man.*

*I'm not exactly sure why I chose bodybuilding, except that I loved it. I loved it from the first moment my fingers closed around a barbell and I felt the challenge and exhilaration of hoisting the heavy steel plates above my head." – Arnold*

*Schwarzenegger*

Become the Champion of Your Own Life instead of thinking one day I might pursue my dream – that day is NOW. There is no more room for maybes. Each day is a day to say to yourself I want to do so and so and today I will do whatever it takes to make that happen. If YOU don't see the goal. If YOU don't IMAGINE it in your mind eye, then who will? 'Maybe' is just an open door to the path of failure when the going gets too tough.

Thus No one said this was easy, but it is worth it. Being sure of yourself and where you want to go is the first step to not letting anything stand in your way. Isn't it about time you became the champion of your own life, just like Arnold? The time is NOW to live like there is no tomorrow. Also, understand that beginnings don't look like endings because lots of people tend to give up on the beginnings and go try something else, this is because lots of people don't recognize greatness in seed form. After all, greatness starts as a seed, therefore just because you are not there yet does not mean you are not to earnestly contend for destiny and the expected end you are destined to have.

# CHAPTER 4

## DON'T SKIP THE PROCESS

Most times we get very relaxed with our normal routines and feel extremely comfortable to the point of no progress because some people will rather keep things as they are than progress. You need to understand it takes divine steps to get you to where you want to be, because most people cannot deal with life because they lack the patience of going through the process of transformation, they want sudden success without knowing for a fact that there is nothing like sudden success, most times things don't happen all of a sudden you need to go through the process because if you skip the process you won't have the power to keep it, realizing anyone who gets there too quickly lacks the tenacity to stay there. After all, if you don't earn it, you can't own it. There are some things you have to learn along the way that helps you be whom you want to be.

*“I always feel like it's two key ingredients when it comes to following your dreams, making something happen that the average person deems difficult. If you truly believe it, that's step one. Step two, is, you know, the hard work that goes along with it.” – J. Cole*

You have to realize the most powerful tool the enemy uses against you is your mind, through your mind it opens the door for struggles, low self-esteem, anger, hostility, and rebellion.

Cos, all of these can make your mind sick, thus, when your mind is sick you get physically sick. Therefore, you need to renew your mind, your perspective, you need to start visualizing your situation in a new way. You have to get your mind ready to handle the process of change for the next level, thus when you finally get to your next level you will realize it is hard to regret the process because now you begin to understand it was good that you have struggled and learned the important things you have learned along the way, whether you like it or not, life will allow certain things to happen to you, certain people will betray you, certain people will shift you out of your comfort zone to move you to the place where you need to be.

*“When we are sure that we are on the right road there is no need to plan our journey too far ahead. No need to burden ourselves with doubts and fears as to the obstacles that may bar our progress. We cannot take more than one step at a time.” – Orison Swett Marden*

Depending on anyone to make you happy, make you feel good or lift your spirit is a sure way to place yourself in isolation. When your joy is dependent on people and conditions, it is restricted. Thus, until you know that you are enough just the way you are, you will continue to look for more. Until you wholeheartedly believe in your value, worth, and worthiness, despite your accomplishments and possessions, or lack thereof, there will always be a void in your spirit. Also, if you look at it from another perspective success is not defined by your material possessions, degrees and certifications, it is determined by purpose, it is about doing the things you are

created to do, finding where you fit and being happy and content to be the authentic you. Remember, whether you like it or not you will face situations that feel impossible, the question is what do you do when you take the right steps and things haven't worked out, you have to keep going, keep pushing, keep being yourself, always expect to win and live to the fullness of your destiny.

Most people expect their validation to come from others, they realize it's easy to rely on others for compliments and approvals, but they need to realize their worth doesn't come from people because if they keep seeking for other people's approval they will end up being disappointed because sometimes people will let them down. After all, if they are always depending on someone else, they will end up being a burden, needy all because they are waiting for others to lift their spirit.

*“People who are unable to motivate themselves must be content with mediocrity, no matter how impressive their other talents.” – Andrew Carnegie*

You have to keep being you, keep trying to be a better you, keep being the best you can, because If you're getting tired of constantly trying to prove yourself to people, that may be an indication that you're impressing the wrong appraisers, good people recognize potential, the wrong ones always devalue what they can't comprehend therefore stop allowing people with poor taste to determine your value because their assessment will always be below your heavenly recommended value. Stop giving discounts. If they didn't create you then how do they have the authority to rate you? You need to realize you

have been crowned with favor, thus even if encouragement don't come from people you can encourage yourself, make yourself feel special you will end up having a better relationships if you start validating yourself, realizing no one is responsible for your happiness, they are not responsible to keep you cheered up, because if yourself worth is based on what people constantly do for you such as giving you compliments or waiting on them to motivate you, and they stop doing what it is that they do you will end up becoming devalued, learn to feed your destiny, realizing just like a seed whatever you feed will grow, therefore the more you feed insecurities, guilt, regret, blame, they will continue to grow, thus divert all your energy away from something that is taking you backwards and put the same energy towards accomplishing your dreams and fulfilling your destiny, realizing you have to reach for things in your future, because your greatest joy, victory, accomplishments are still in your future.

# CHAPTER 5

## DON'T SKIP THE PROCESS

Commitment involves dedicating yourself to something like a person, cause or task, a commitment makes something on your wish list an obligation thus when you commit to something you have to do it also its good to understand that commitment is not a feeling until you have a taste of finishing you will not respect yourself, thus until you endure to the end even in the face of strive, defeat, adversity, struggle, strive, pain, and you still showed up and continue to fight on no matter the circumstance, thus after a while, something will begin to grow inside of you, also you have to set a standard for yourself because this is a sure way of guiding your perspective, therefore, If I may ask, do you even have core values? What are your core values? What's your mission statement? That's what people want to know when they get closer to you. Your core values are expressions of what to expect from you, it tells your boundaries, beliefs, what you will and won't do, things that have defined you, educated you and trained you. You have to spend more time thinking about your core values than your advantages.

*“Desire is the key to motivation, but it is determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal - a commitment to excellence - that will enable you to attain the*

*success you seek.” – Mario Andretti*

Commitment simply shows up in your life in what you do and comes in several packages, you either commit to being successful or not, productive or not, happy or not. If I may ask, how committed are you, how do you spend your time, whom do you associate with? For instance, tell me how you spend your time, and I will tell you how committed you are. You have to say to yourself; I won't say I will do anything unless you are committed to doing it. Commitment is a divine power buried deep within your spirit, it is a form of an instrument ready for you to use whenever you need it, even though most times you can be committed to something and not get the result but the good thing is that if you think it, commit to it and take action you will win.

*“You need three things to win: discipline, hard work and before everything maybe, commitment. No one will make it without those three. Sport teaches you that.” – Haile Gebrselassie*

In everything, you do you have to choose to go either all the way, stop in the middle, or not even go at all. Most people tend to leave and not complete their mission especially when things get difficult because they feel they will explore another option which is the escape route. Therefore you do not need to give any excuses, go after what you want, like your life depends on it, like there is no tomorrow, thus you have to understand that every thought in your head should be towards that dream, you need to ask yourself, how bad do you want it, if you want it, then set your mind to your target then crush it.



*“The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.” – Vince Lombardi*

The urge to quit will come, thus every successful being has felt it, every winner, soldier, and successful people from all aspects of life has felt it, but the good thing is that despite all, they stood tall, kept their heads up and eventually became successful. Therefore don't you dare give up on your dreams, do not back out now, never give other people the chance to talk you out of your dream, remember at first it may be very difficult, imagine the pains you feel in your body the first time you worked out at the gym, but if you eventually keep going the pain becomes bearable and you will even be willing to reach for more. Commitment is standing for your life, standing up for yourself despite what life throws at you, it tests your willingness to stand tall and be whom you are created to be.

Let me share a story of one of the most successful businessmen that has ever lived. Steve Jobs, who was an American businessman, inventor, industrial designer, co-founder, chairman, and chief executive officer (CEO) of Apple Inc., CEO and majority shareholder of Pixar. You can't make a self-respecting “famous entrepreneurs” list without throwing in Steve Jobs. Jobs dropped out of college because his family couldn't handle the financial burden of his education. He unofficially continued to audit classes, living off free meals from the local Hare Krishna temple and returning Coke bottles for change just to get by. Jobs credited the calligraphy class he stopped in on as his inspiration for Mac's revolutionary typefaces and font design.

Jobs went on to have an unbelievable career, eventually forming the Apple Computer Company with his childhood friend and electronics expert Steve Wozniak. Often referred to as “The Grandfather of the Digital Revolution,” Jobs forever changed the consumer electronics industry. At the time of his death, his net worth was over \$8.3 billion, and his influence will be felt for many digital generations to come.

You need to understand that there's nothing miraculous about greatness, it is not divine, it is not incredible, it is simply seeing the word “Difficult” like a staircase instead of a brick wall. It means you get the opportunity to both give more of yourself and get more from the world, it is your secret door and your passageway. The only thing worth a second of your time is making sure that every step you take points you in the direction of where you want to be.

*“One has a responsibility to clean up one's space and make it livable as far as one's resources go. That includes not only material resources but psychological resources: the commitment of time and a portion of your mind to something when you'd rather be doing something else.” – Wole Soyinka*

Most people go through the process and actions of commitment but they never get committed because they have no understanding of their responsibility before they get committed thus if you think someone will come to you and give you a hint on how to live your life, you are kidding, realize that each day life is a challenge, you have to always work on and examine your mind, it is the battleground, thus when you cannot get hold of your mind, you cannot focus, make decisions and commit. Also, most people will give you reasons why they

cannot succeed, why it is hard, why they cannot do it, understand that most times those who couldn't get something done will convince you that you can't, you need to set a standard for your life. You can't get people to believe in your dream until you believe in it yourself, therefore stop asking people to invest in things that you can't invest in yourself, you need to understand that nothing just happens, it takes a process of decision, commitment, dedication, and hard work. Commitment will show up in your life in what you do, therefore most people are usually intimidated by the word commitment because it means no excuse is acceptable you have to do it. If you decide to do something and, in the process, it gets hard then do it hard. Failure to keep your commitment will have a negative effect not only on you but others as well because other people will start realizing they cannot rely on you and that has a tremendous effect on your reputation.

# THE BLUEPRINT TO SUCCESS

# CHAPTER 6

## DREAM ON

You have several opportunities in life to be who you want to be, but the question is who knows how many tomorrows they will get? If you do not do what you need to do today, tomorrow may be too late, therefore at the end of your life, you want to look back and say “I am proud of myself for pursuing my dream and making it a reality” You have to believe it is possible, never give up and know that in life you will face different challenges and experiences but the choice is yours to see this experience positively or negatively, in other sense how can you benefit from a negative situation, I believe it's an opportunity to take a step backward and re-approach the challenges you are facing and this time come back better.

*“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.” – Harriet Tubman*

Every single day provide a blank page in your story for you to fill out because you are the writer of your story, you can either choose to change your story or simply quite your story, only you can determine what happens to your story, therefore you have to keep fighting because your life depends on it, imagine yourself being a soldier and you got hit by a bullet, your colleagues will tell you to keep breathing, don't stop fighting, it is not the time for you to give up and eventually you held on

and paramedics arrive, you have then survived the scary incident.

*“Stay true to yourself, yet be open to learning. Work hard, and never give up on your dreams, even when nobody else believes they can come true but you. These are not clichés but real tools you need no matter what you do in life to stay focused on your path.”—Phillip Sweet*

Life doesn't happen to you, it happens for you, remember fear will come therefore you can either spend all your time and energy worrying about the pathway to your future. The world is filled with talented people who have never accomplished their dream, the truth is most people think success is just an easy transition from one level to another while this is just a myth, also on the road to success challenges and struggles will come, thus how you deal with this depends on how successful you will be.

I would like to share the story of a surfer legend Bethany Hamilton who was born in North Shore, Kauai, which is a small island in the state of Hawaii. She started surfing when she was five years old, under the guidance of her parents. Her surfing skills progressed quickly and, when she was in grade school, she entered a push-in contest and won first place. She entered various contests during the years, and she became a Rip curl girl and won first place in the under-girl's contests while competing against girls had many more years of experience. On a sunny Halloween morning in 2003, Hamilton, who was thirteen years old back then, went out surfing with her best friend, Hamilton lay on her surfboard waiting for a wave with her left arm hanging from the side, a tiger shark attacked her

without any warning. It took a seventeen-inch wide bite out of the surfboard and her arm. In the ferocious fight for her life, the shark tore her entire arm off just below her shoulder before vanishing.

Hamilton quickly swam to shore only using her remaining arm and Blanchard's father used a surf leash as a tourniquet to help stop her from bleeding to death before she was rushed to a nearby hospital. This incident seemed to end Hamilton's goal of being the greatest woman surfer and it almost ended her life. She had lost almost 70% of her blood that morning, but she didn't give up the fight to live. Even though the event she lived was traumatic, Hamilton didn't give up on her dream. Just ten weeks after the accident, the determined teen surfer went back to the ocean to relearn how to surf. With a new surfboard created so she could paddle with ease, she taught herself to not only adapt to the board but also adapt to the rough sea out there with only one arm. After only a couple of practices, she started to surf competitively again. That year she placed fifth at the National Surfing Championship and joined the United States National Surfing Team. Hamilton won the 2004 ESPY award.

You need to realize life has a way of pushing our dream, it is easy to settle for the bottom even though you have all these potentials to be successful inside of you. Although your dream may be buried it's still active therefore it's not too late to see it manifest even though you are doing the right thing and the wrong result happens, thus do not worry it's part of the process because every setback and every delay is a set up to get you where you have to be, although it may take a long time and might look impossible but eventually you will get there.

Never attempt to take the easy way out, never attempt to be the second-best, even though you are knocked down, get up, carry your cross and go again, this time stronger than ever. The truth is, do not search for defining moments for they will never come, you need to believe that you have what it takes to make your dream come true, remember you have got the ability, talent, skills and you must dare to dream big and make things happen.

*“All men dream, but not equally. Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds, wake in the day to find that it was vanity: but the dreamers of the day are dangerous men, for they may act on their dreams with open eyes, to make them possible.” – T. E. Lawrence*

Believing in yourself is a choice because what keeps you on top is to be mentally prepared over and over again, you are always ready no matter what because when you are always ready you will be physically ready and to take advantage of your opportunity when it comes. Most times fear tends to stop you from accomplishing your dream, therefore when you challenge your fear you will stay all the way and be whom you are created to be. Remember your greatest fear is not that you will fail, it is that you will never fly.



# CHAPTER 7

## RAISE YOUR STANDARD

It is not what you get that makes you happy, it is what you become and what you can give thus, to become more of yourself, to increase your worth and value you have to raise your standard. You need to realize that winners win and losers lose, you have to prove to yourself that you can get this done on your own and win then you have a sense of liberation, you have to be confident you can get through and survive any adverse situation on your own, therefore with this kind of mentality you will win and soar high and be whom you want to be.

*“Let us be about setting high standards for life, love, creativity, and wisdom. If our expectations in these areas are low, we are not likely to experience wellness. Setting high standards makes every day and every decade worth looking forward to.” – Greg Anderson*

Remember don't just be a consumer you have to be a producer as well, you don't have to be a spectator every time, you have to be a player, you need to grow and be the best you can be, also controlling your choice, attention is parts of the growth process as well, remember you are the lock, key, and the passageway to success. When you get it right in your mind, you

will get it right in your head, you will be inspired to work towards it and let it become your reality. It is for a fact that no one else can feel sorry for you, only you do, you need to realize no one owns you anything not even your family, friends, colleagues, government, therefore if you want something you have to go all the way and get it. Although most times you have to try and push, it's better to try and fail than not trying at all, only you deserve to see the view on the other side of your breakthrough that is why you need to buckle up and be the best you can be. The only way to get results in your life is to make a firm decision that no matter what life throws at you will survive, that whatever the storms of life, whatever the struggle, you will breakthrough.

You do not have to give up on yourself so quickly, you do not want to shut the door on yourself so quickly, remember at the end of the day you will not be the only one to benefit on your happiness, prosperity and success because all these are contagious you spread to people around you. Also, you need to have the courage to do that which you have to do to get where you want to because the only difference between a winner and loser is that when winners fall, they get back up and go again until they succeed, also you must not only try something you must commit to whatever it is that you want to do and be the best you can.

*“Any time you sincerely want to make a change, the first thing you must do is to raise your standards. When people ask me what changed my life eight years ago, I tell them that the most important thing was changing what I demanded of myself. I wrote down all the things I would no longer accept in my life,*

*all the things I would no longer tolerate, and all the things that I aspired to become.” – Tony Robbins*

You have to learn how to overcome obstacles, you have to see your obstacle as a pathway to your next level, know that only you can choose your life, so whatever you do not like you can change it, remember everything starts by changing your mentality, thus if you do not get it right in your head you will not get it right in real sense. I believe that with hard work, persistence and dedication you will be everything you are meant to be.

THE BLUEPRINT TO SUCCESS

# CHAPTER 8

## UNIQUE ATTRIBUTES TO SUCCESS

### *What Is Success?*

Many people have a different orientation when it comes to success, how it influences lives, careers, and how it fits best to their understanding. When people hear of success, it means different things; to some, a feeling that tingles for excitement about what you do, sticking with what matters through hard times or living a life you can feel proud of; to others, it means the completion of an objective or task.

From my understanding of success, it must come from within; I mean, the image of success has to be sketched out in our minds. Being a believer in God, the greatest yardstick is to measure success by God's standard. This is far more important than the worldly standard. Also, understanding the biblical perspective of failure is the first step toward successful living.

Just like a tree, in which its seed produces fruit, you cannot be fruitful if your seeds are not planted in the soil. You simply can't be successful and flourish if you're not grounded. You have to move from one stage to another. Most times success requires stages. If you read about the list of successful people, you will see that it takes a while to move from one stage to another. In most cases, it often takes years to accomplish

success as there is nothing like fast success. A short cut to success, in most instances, often leads to failure and disappointment; with hard work, trust in God, dedication, belief, perseverance, and faith success will be inevitable.

### ***Humble Beginners***

The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. Therefore, slow down. Everything has been programmed by the almighty God to happen at a set time, keep doing your part and the almighty will take you places you have never imagined. If you rush this process, you'll miss the reason you were chosen to face it. The moment you stop regretting the struggles, lessons will be learned, and much strength will be gained. Therefore, if you spent as much time changing your life as you do complaining about it, you'd be on your way to happiness by now.

Most people in life get caught up in the fact that their beginning was rough, and they get discouraged about the future. The story of Job was a very interesting one. Job lost everything he had. He was disappointed and discouraged, but in the end, God restored everything. When we have peace in our hearts and minds, we draw peace into our lives. When struggles present themselves, we can stand firm. All of our experiences, no matter how awful they appear to be, are temporary. Acceptance of experience as a temporary situation can make it a lot easier to handle; therefore, what you're passing through now is not

permanent. Don't worry. Just like Job, who had everything restored, God will replace and restore everything you have lost.

I would like to share some stories about people around us who had a humble beginning and became successful. Kenny Troutt, who was the Founder of Excel Communications, grew up with a bartender dad and paid for his tuition at Southern Illinois University by selling life insurance. He made most of his money from the phone company Excel Communications, which he founded in 1988 and took public in 1996. Two years later, Troutt merged his company with Teleglobe in a \$3.5 billion deal. He's now retired and invests heavily in racehorses.

Starbucks' Howard Schultz in an interview with British Tabloid Mirror said, "Growing up, I always felt like I was living on the other side of the tracks. I knew the people on the other side had more resources, more money, happier families. I knew I had to climb up to the other side. I didn't know why or how I wanted to climb over that fence. I may have a suit and tie on now, but I know where I'm from and I know what it's like."

Schultz ended up winning a football scholarship to the University of Northern Michigan and went to work for Xerox after graduation. Shortly after, he took over a coffee shop called Starbucks, which at the time had only 60 shops. Schultz became the company's CEO in 1987 and grew the coffee chain to more than 16,000 outlets worldwide.

The story of the Legendary Oprah Winfrey was also an inspiration. Oprah Winfrey was born into a poor family in Mississippi, but this didn't stop her from winning a scholarship

to Tennessee State University and becoming the first African American TV correspondent in the state, at the age of 19.

In 1983, Winfrey moved to Chicago to work for an AM talk show which would later be called “The Oprah Winfrey Show.” According to Forbes, she's one of the richest black women on the planet, and also has her multi-million-dollar investment, which is “OWN” (Oprah Winfrey Network).

I would like to also share the inspiring story of the successful Ralph Lauren and the legendary Hollywood actor Sylvester Stallone. Starting with the former. The Iconic designer Ralph Lauren was born Ralph Lifshitz in New York City on October 14, 1939. He was just a dirt-poor Jewish immigrant who was bullied frequently because of his last name, “Lipschitz.” At the age of 16, Ralph changed his last name to Lauren. He graduated high school in Bronx N.Y. but later dropped out of college to join the Army. It was while working as a clerk at Brooks Brothers that Lauren questioned whether men were ready for wider and brighter designs in ties.

Determined to follow his dreams, Ralph launched his first line of clothing—men's ties. At the time, narrow ties were in style, but Ralph insisted that his ties be fat and wide. His investors thought he was crazy, but it wasn't Ralph who was crazy; it was the number of ties he sold. The year he decided to make his dream a reality, 1967, Lauren sold \$500,000 worth of ties, bringing Ralph Lauren from a no-name to a hot rising fashion icon. He started Polo the next year. At first, Bloomingdale's refused to carry his ties with the Ralph Lauren branding, but called him back 6 months later after realizing the popularity of his ties. Overall, according to Forbes, he has an estimated



worth of \$7 billion.

Back in the day, Stallone was a struggling actor in every definition. At some point, he got so broke that he stole his wife's jewelry and sold it. Things got so bad that he even ended up homeless. He slept at the New York bus station for 3 days, unable to pay rent or afford food. His lowest point came when he tried to sell his dog at the liquor store to any stranger. He didn't have money to feed the dog anymore. He sold it at \$25 only as he walked away crying. Two weeks later, he saw a boxing match between Mohammed Ali and Chuck Wepner, and that match inspired him to write the script for the famous movie, ROCKY.

Stallone wrote the script for 20 hours! He tried to sell it and got an offer for \$125,000 for the script, though he had just ONE REQUEST. He wanted to STAR in the movie. He wanted to be the MAIN ACTOR Rocky, but the studio said NO. They wanted a REAL STAR. They said he “looked funny and talked funny.” He left with his script. A few weeks later, the studio offered him \$250,000 for the script. He refused. They even offered \$350,000. He still refused. They wanted his movie, but NOT him. He said NO. He had to be IN THAT MOVIE.

After a while, the studio agreed to give Stallone \$35,000 for the script and let him star in it! The rest is history! The movie won Best Picture, Best Directing, and Best Film Editing at the prestigious Oscar Awards. He was even nominated for BEST ACTOR! The Movie ROCKY was even inducted into the American National Film Registry as one of the greatest movies ever!

Do you know the first thing Stallone bought with the \$35,000? THE DOG HE SOLD. Yes, Stallone LOVED HIS DOG SO MUCH that he stood at the liquor store for 3 days waiting for the man he sold his dog to. On the 3rd day, he saw the man coming with the dog, Stallone explained why he sold the dog and begged for the dog back. The man refused. Stallone offered him \$100. The man refused. He offered him \$500. Yes, he refused. Even \$1000. Believe it or not, Stallone had to pay \$15,000 for the same dog he sold for \$25 only! And he finally got his dog back!

*“Many of life's failures are people who did not realize how close they were to success when they gave up” —Thomas A. Edison*

Therefore, never give up on your dream. Be persistent and stay focused. Success is closer than you think.

# CHAPTER 9

## OPPORTUNITIES IN CHALLENGES

### *The Pains and Struggles of Success*

People try to hide their pain, but they are wrong. Pain is something to carry, like a cellphone. Pain is a feeling. Your feelings are a part of you and your reality. If you feel ashamed of them, and hide them, you're letting society destroy your reality because *it's the feeling that creates the attraction, not just the picture or the thought* (Jack Canfield).

In most cases, people believe the promise but not the demands. It is the demand of a promise that qualifies you to the fulfillment of the promise; thus, there's nothing provided for without conditions to meet. What you think is a battle is a training exercise. Most times God often waits for the bad to get worse to prove He's the one who got you out of a situation.

When the time comes for growth and change, we must have the courage and faith to let go, because whatever leaves our life makes room for something better. After the tears pass and the days go by, you'll see that some people and situations were only meant to be connected to your yesterday. Not everyone you meet or everything you have experienced is meant to stay forever.

Don't miss your future trying to recreate your history. It's okay

to move forward, even when it hurts. The question is, when will you take ownership of you? Start from where it hurts the most. Accept God's love by exposing it to the areas in your soul that hurt the most. Forgive, love, and move forward. The presence of pain doesn't mean the absence of grace.

I would like to share a story of one of the most successful humans to have ever lived, the great Albert Einstein. Albert Einstein was born in Ulm, in the Württemberg kingdom of the German Empire on 14 March 1879. His parents were Hermann Einstein, a salesman and engineer, and Pauline Koch.

Most of us take Einstein's name as synonymous with genius, but he didn't always show such promise. Einstein did not speak until he was four and did not read until he was seven, causing his teachers and parents to think he was mentally handicapped, slow, and anti-social. Eventually, he was expelled from school and was refused admittance to the Zurich Polytechnic School. It might have taken him a bit longer, but most people would agree that he caught on pretty well in the end.

By 1908, Einstein was recognized as a leading scientist and appointed as a lecturer at the University of Bern. The following year, after giving a lecture on electrodynamics and the relativity principle at the University of Zurich, Alfred Kleiner recommended him to the faculty for a newly created professorship in theoretical physics. Einstein was appointed associate professor in 1909.

In 1920, Einstein became a Foreign Member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences.

In 1921, Einstein was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for

his services to Theoretical Physics, and especially for his discovery of the Law of The Photoelectric Effect. His mathematical principles also helped in the successful development of the atomic bomb during the World War II.

God gives us the grace to get through what we are going through. Grace doesn't stop you from passing through pain, struggles, tribulations, or hard times. It sustains you and makes you an overcomer.

Just like Einstein, always remember everything you have gotten through. All the times you wanted to give up, but you got through another day. Never forget how much strength you have garnered and developed.

Let your pain serve your purpose rather than using it to justify your dysfunction. The past should be left in the past or it can steal your future. It's better to live life for what tomorrow can bring and not what yesterday has taken away.

Every day is a gift. Grace gives you the power to function despite how you feel because God's grace is sufficient for you in all seasons. Through the grace of the almighty living God, it's very important to know that we can do anything through Christ that strengthens us.

Everyone has their own story; likewise, in one time or another, most people have gone through their lives with struggle, pains, hardships, or trying times. But the most important thing is to remember how far you have come, the blessings in the valleys you have passed through, and the courage and strength you have learned and developed.

### ***Don't Complain About the Valley***

It's a fact, "Never Forget" how far you have come. Everything you have gotten through. All the times you have pushed on, even when you think you couldn't. The mornings you got out of bed, no matter how hard it was. The times you wanted to give up, but you got through another day. When you look back over your life, and the uniqueness of the struggles, hardship, pain, and situations in your life, you will be more confident knowing that it only triggers you into a new level of greatness and testimony.

We triumph even in our troubles, knowing that trouble produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope—a hope which never disappoints us since God's love floods our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us. Never forget how much strength you have gained and developed. You may be in a valley right now. Don't complain about the valley. There's a blessing in that valley. It wasn't sent to harm you; it was sent to increase you.

Every obstacle conquered, and every victory gained will give you more faith and power. You will have a greater ability to win. Therefore, don't hold on to your history at the expense of your destiny. Fuel your future instead of feeding your past. Don't look back over your life and lament over lost opportunities. Those doors were closed for a reason.

Remember, if an egg is broken by an outside force, the life ends. If it's broken by an inside force life begins. Great things always begin from the inside.

Adversity can harden or loosen you up to make you better—if you let it. Instead of fighting what we can't control, we can put our energy and emotions and exertions where they will have a real impact. Just because the conditions aren't exactly to your liking, or you don't feel ready yet, doesn't mean you get a pass. If you want momentum, you must create it yourself—right now—by getting up and getting started. Most times you tend to underestimate what it takes to get you to the next level. You want the promise without problems, because whenever God is getting ready to promote you, there will be an escalation of trouble. But you must remember at all times, God's grace is sufficient to help you overcome any obstacle.

When you're facing one challenge or another, take time to define the problems and difficulties that you face with increased clarity and specificity. It bound this to yield better results because you will get clearer about the outcomes you desire. You will also be able to delineate the constituent tasks that can potentially put you closer to your desired solution. Follow those tasks through to the end with perseverance and patience, and you may reduce the load of your problems.

### *Celebrate Small Victories Along the Way*

You have to know that celebrating partial victories is what will lead you to total victory. The intent is to give a little love to yourself for all the hard work you put into each day. Your wins aren't based on what others deem significant; wins are individual and based on what's important to you, and unless

you look hard enough, you won't always find them, so keep your eyes open.

When we think about progress, we often imagine how good it feels to achieve a long-term goal or experience a breakthrough. These big wins are great—but they are relatively rare. The good news is that even small wins can boost your inner work life tremendously.

“Small wins are a steady application of a small advantage,” one Cornell professor wrote in 1984. Also, as Tech Cocktail's Frank Gruber has pointed out, “to build a team of great people, and keep them engaged, you need to create a culture of celebration that recognizes small wins. Studies also show that small wins provide a lasting boost in happiness. In the Happiness Advantage,” Shawn Achor discusses the common misconception that if we work hard, we'll be successful, which will make us happy. However, Positive Psychology says we may have that equation backward: *Being happy makes us more successful.*

### ***Don't Try to Be Somebody Else, Create Your Own Identity***

You are unique and one of a kind; you are not a burden to the world, but a blessing to the world. You are powerful with great potential. You must be courageous to admit that all things are possible.

What God has given other people is not going to work for you. Don't try to be like somebody else, create your own identity. Don't base your identity on other people's perception of you



because popularity does not validate or define you. Don't be distracted from your destiny, trying to manage people's opinions. What they think about you is none of your business. Who you are is your Self Identity; the way you look at yourself, and your relationship to the world.

We shouldn't confuse Self Identity with Self Esteem, which is perhaps the single most important emotional gauge of our ability to feel almost all other positive emotions and beliefs about ourselves. For example, it affects our measure of happiness, success, wellbeing, confidence, assurances, and so on, thus making up all these feelings in a combined sensation called Self Esteem.

You are unique; you are different; you have a special talent; you have what someone else doesn't have. What you need to do is find it.

Getting to know yourself is a very important aspect that you need to understand. The first step toward accomplishing that is to get acquainted with your own needs, values, and boundaries. Whether you have a thin air on the mountain, or full air on the valley, you have to find out what's in you. You cannot bear to live or die without knowing what's in you.

Remember, you are a work in progress. Pray and ask God to reveal His purpose for your life. It's not for God alone that you chase him, it's selfishly for you because he has secrets to your potential. He had the key to the misery of you. There is no chance of unlocking the door to yourself without getting the key. He took the key and hid it in His garment; He started up the hill and said you will never know if you don't chase me.

You have to get out of your comfort zone to catch Him; you have to overcome your fear, your reservations, your struggles to chase Him. You can't back off because you know He has the keys to you in His garment.

Remember, the Lord has been preparing you for what you're about to do all of your life. Everything you have been through only makes you stronger and it shall not be wasted, says the Lord. He humbled you so He would exalt you. Therefore, don't believe what your eyes are telling you, all they show are limitations. Limitations are defined as a limiting condition, restrictive weakness. Look with your understanding, find out what you already know, and you will see the way to fly.

# CHAPTER 10

## DISCIPLINE

### *Life Influences*

People in your life matter. Your background does matter; therefore, don't waste your time on people who don't sharpen you. You need to evaluate who's on your team. Who's speaking into your life? Who are you giving your time and attention to? Are they building you up or tearing you down?

Let me ask you a question: who are the people you spend your time with? It doesn't matter how smart you are. It doesn't matter how talented you are, which skills you have, where you are born, or which family you came from. All that counts, if you want to be successful in life, are the people you surround yourself with.

An individual may be born into riches but live an unhappy life, while someone from more humble beginnings may be able to manifest their dreams in record-breaking time due to the company they keep, which influences their way of thinking and thus resulting in a mindset for success.

Do these people have a positive or a negative influence in your life? Do they cause more good than harm? Compare yourself to a seed planted deep in the soil. Are they nurturing you to bring forth good fruit or otherwise? If the answer is more

negative than positive, now it's time for you to evaluate yourself and step into a new level, so you can move on with your life.

*“Associate only with positive, focused people whom you can learn from and will not drain your valuable energy with uninspiring attitudes. By developing relationships with those committed to constant improvement and the pursuit of the best that life has to offer, you will have plenty of company on your path to the top of whatever mountain you seek to climb.”*

—Robin Sharma

Therefore, when you sit down at the end of your life and reflect on its value, you realize that your real treasures were in your relationships and not in your possessions.

### ***Time Management***

Time management is the act or process of planning and exercising conscious control over the amount of time spent on specific activities, especially to increase effectiveness, efficiency, or productivity.

Time management is the ability to plan and control how you spend the hours in your day, which allows you to accomplish your goals effectively. Poor time management is related to procrastination, and problems with self-control. Skills involved in managing your time include planning for the future, setting goals, prioritizing tasks, and monitoring where your time goes.

I would like to share some skills required for effective time management such as planning, setting clear goals, keeping to-do lists, breaking your goals down into discrete steps, and reviewing your progress. A daily list of tasks. This is an essential part of time management. Make and update your list regularly; for example, writing it on a small sheet and paste it in specific areas like on the door of your refrigerator, bathroom wall, car dashboards, and some other convenient locations so you can stay focused on what's important.

### *Prioritizing*

Effectiveness and Efficiency are two separate things. To be effective, you need to decide what tasks are at the top of your to-do list. When you focus on these tasks, it is called the act of prioritizing. Sort out a task based on priority; spending time on unimportant tasks can cause an individual to be efficient but not effective.

Breakdown tasks into components. Breaking down tasks helps you accomplish them one step at a time. Completing one task before the next helps to properly maximize your time.

Take a small break between work. This can help to maximize your work output significantly. Taking a small break between work helps your system reboot and prepares you for the next process of task completion. Taking about a half an hour to an hour break will usually help you become more effective at work in the afternoon.

One of the most important things we should be aware of is

Procrastination. You do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. Thus, when we talk about time management, we must mention these three things: Prioritization, Organization, and Goal Setting.

### *Live with Purpose*

Once you've discovered your unique gifts and talents, think about how you can share them with others. Sharing your life's purpose will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. Many people live with the limiting beliefs they learned while growing up. Now is the time to let go of conditioned thought patterns and open up to new possibilities.

*“I'm not out to compete with anyone, I'm here to complete, by encouraging and inspiring souls through a text at a time.”*

*– Bernard Kelvin Clive*

Allow yourself to be conscious of what makes your heart sing and do that thing. You are stronger than you think. To start living your life on purpose, simply make a list of valuable milestones you've already achieved. Take stock of how you've already lived a life of purpose, even if you didn't realize it.

Happiness comes from within. Happiness starts with reshaping your mindset to be positive and eliminating all negative thoughts. Reminding yourself of past achievements can be an important nudge when you feel stuck or uninspired.

All people are made in the image of God. Each of us is born with a purpose and calling that we can discover or completely miss. The influence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers gives us insight into His purpose for us. We find peace and courage when we sense the confirmation of the Spirit that we are in the right place at the right time of our designated calling.

*“It does not matter how long you are spending on the earth, how much money you have gathered, or how much attention you have received. It is the amount of positive vibration you have radiated in life that matters.” – Amit Ray*

*“If there is no God, then Man and the universe are doomed. Like prisoners condemned to death, we await our unavoidable execution. There is no God, and there is no immortality. And what is the consequence of this? It means that life itself is absurd. It means that the life we have is without ultimate significance, value, or purpose.” – William Lane Craig*

Therefore, it's good to know that most people believe the promise, but not demands, it's the demands of a promise that qualifies you to the fulfillment of the promise because there's nothing provided for without conditions to meet. There is a place for you at the top only if you're interested, provided you fulfill the conditions.

THE BLUEPRINT TO SUCCESS



# CHAPTER 11

## COMMITMENT STRATEGY

### *Be Open and Admit What You Don't Know*

All things are revealed in time. Knowledge is never wasted. It is important to open yourself to receive new information from expected and unexpected sources. We must give ourselves rooms to grow. We must understand that learning never ends. While we think it would be nice to know everything, we're better off not knowing, because not knowing brings growth, surprise, and the opportunity to learn. Most people fail to admit they don't know something, either because they don't want people to mock them or laugh at them; thereby, they fail to ask questions, thus ending up with insufficient information.

You can't change that reality; and given how quickly everything is moving now, you can't avoid having to learn new skills. You must remember that whatever you did yesterday died the moment you finished. Nobody can live on what they did. The question is: *what are you going to do today?*

You can make the process a whole lot easier by simply accepting it; by telling yourself, I may be bad at this for a while until I get good at it. You need to understand you are a work in progress. The more you embrace that, the more you stand to gain.

Learning to embrace what you don't know forces you to get comfortable with ambiguity, and maybe even see it as a blessing. You don't know what ought to be seen, and you don't know what ought to be built. Let God accomplish what He is going to do. He doesn't show you to behold anything. He flashes the glory before you, allowing you to catch a glimpse of where you shall be, then sends you back down where you are.

Every provision has a process to it. If provision hasn't come to you, Go For It! There's a place for you at the top, but only if you are interested, and provided you fulfill the conditions. Instead of forcing all your ducks in a row, before they're ready, take advantage of the uncertainty by giving yourself space to think and consider. Acknowledging what you don't know prevents you from acting impulsively. Instead, allow the unknown to encourage you in taking some time to figure out the best next steps.

### ***Become Comfortable with Criticism***

Become comfortable with criticism. No matter who you are, the truth is criticism hurts. And the first step to using criticism to your advantage is to admit that it hurts, and to know that you are not weak or alone in feeling upset by it.

Dealing with criticism positively is an important issue. At one point or another in our lives, you will face criticism. Though it is hard to accept and can sometimes be challenging, how you respond to criticism is key. You have two choices; you can either respond positively or negatively to criticism. A positive

reaction to criticism helps you grow into a better you, while a negative reaction to criticism can affect your ego causing anger, stress, or frustration.

*“Criticism is something you can easily avoid by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing.” – Aristotle*

It is really important to understand two types of criticism, Destructive and Constructive Criticism.

Destructive Criticism can hurt your ego badly and can have a serious negative effect like anger, stress, or frustration. How do we deal with destructive criticism? Try to not take to heart or respond in anger to what you hear. A negative response can have a massive effect on your image. It can cause a lot of negative effects on the other person, which could damage your relationship. Another means of handling criticism is knowing when to keep your mouth shut and walk away.

Constructive Criticism. This type of criticism is one that you can learn from, even though it points out your mistakes. It is very important to analyze what you can learn from this type of criticism to become a better you, especially when somebody is attacking your character. Although it is hard to accept, that doesn't mean you should ignore it.

In the means of criticism, there's usually an element of truth, just try to sit back and see things from the person's perspective. Maximize all the negative comments in the criticism to be a better you. Interpreting someone else's feedback is usually an opportunity for rational thinking. Sometimes, despite a negative tone, criticism is incredibly useful. Usually, people around us want to help us, not judge us.

Criticism presents an opportunity to choose peace over conflict. Criticism allows you to let people know how they can better relate with you. Learning to move forward after criticism, even if you don't feel incredibly confident, ensures that no isolated comment will prevent you from seizing your dreams. Receiving feedback can remind you that you are human. If you admit your weakness and work on them, without coming down on yourself, you will experience more success and fulfillment.

When you receive criticism, try not to react immediately, because your gut response will be charged with emotions. One of the best things to do is to remove the word “criticism” from your vocabulary and replace it with the word “feedback.” Changing your mindset about the feedback you received helps turn the situation from a negative to a positive. Some situations may arise which can make you question why people treat you in such a manner, but remember, God only wants you to fight battles He has permitted to you. Some battles need to be ignored, leave the fight for God.

Whichever aspect of your life you receive feedback from, use it to your advantage and turn your weakness into your strength. It boosts your learning experiences; breaks down any tension you may be feeling and enter a state of improvement.

When we know who we are, accept why we are, and understand what we are living to learn, the self becomes a constant source of encouragement. How good you are at accepting and using negative feedback is greatly determined by how you view it. If the feedback is viewed as one more point of data to assimilate and analyze, it will allow you to make a

better decision, and prevent an emotional impact.

### ***Stay True to Your Purpose and Keep Your Faith in God***

Life is not fair, as people say, but it's reasonable to know that you will reap what you sow; what you put into life you will get. Trying to get sudden results may harm your chances of success in the long run, because whatever you work for will appreciate and lasts longer.

A good example of a story in the scriptures we can learn from is the story of Abraham, "Friend of God." God made a promise with Abraham. One remarkable thing about God and His promises to Abraham is that He told Abraham the same thing several times, but Abraham and Sarah weren't quite sure how God was going to fulfill His promise. They couldn't have children, and it seemed obvious that his problem was a major obstacle in the promise's way of becoming a great nation.

If you were Abraham, one question we would have asked is: *how possible is it for someone to call you a friend and not fulfill his promise to you?* Even to the extent of your age-stricken years. At the age of 90, you can't even bear a child of your own.

I mentioned something earlier about how most of us try to find shortcuts to success; with the story of Abraham and Sarah, they both decided to solve the problem themselves, taking matters into their own hands, hence leaving God out of the equation. To them, it seemed like God was delaying and, in the meantime, trouble would have come their way.

How many times have we taken matters into our own hands

and tried to think for God? The simple word that describes what makes most people miss their promise is “Impatience.”

*Finally, Sarah became pregnant long after she had passed the childbearing age and gave birth to Isaac.*

Reading further in the same chapter, you would think God would have been satisfied that they waited in faith for Him to fulfill His promise of giving them an heir. However, we read about how God tested the strength of Abraham by commanding him to take his only true heir, Isaac, to a mountain as a sacrifice to God; eventually, a ram was used as a replacement.

I would like to share an inspirational story shared by a Pastor. He spoke about how bad things were for him in the past, how he would wake up early Sunday mornings and walk to church. He would get to church, clean up the surroundings of the whole church, arrange chairs, and do whatever had to be done before church service. This was the same routine every Sunday.

He went on to do this for a very long time, but because things weren't working out for him in his personal life, he started questioning God; asking why things weren't working out for him, despite working for God and using all his resources to serve God. As he was praying, the Holy Spirit ministered to him to keep being faithful and stick with his purpose. After several weeks, he decided to break his routine, due to the struggles. He hung in there and stuck with his purpose.

A few Sundays later, he took a walk to a nearby store, very close to the church, where a lady drove by and parked right across the street. She kept calling his name, but he could not place her face. The lady thanked him very much and reminded

him that he prayed for her several years ago before she traveled to Europe. The lady introduced him to some of her influential friends and wrote him a huge check. He got a job in Abuja, Nigeria, via one of the people the lady linked him with from Lagos. And from Abuja, he found his way into the United States of America.

This short story helps us to understand that no matter what tribulation and trial you might face, never give up; stick with your purpose, and just like this pastor, the purpose of God for our lives will manifest in Jesus' name. Amen.

We can also learn from the story of Joseph in the scriptures. Let me ask you a question, *do you know what it takes to be handsome, gifted, faithful, and hated by your brothers; so much that they would sell you out of their lives?* This perfectly describes the story of Joseph, who was the first son born to Jacob through Rachel, and therefore he was his favorite son. If you are in Joseph's shoes, it's quite easier to have given up such that you would have forgotten your purpose.

One of the most amazing things we can learn from the story of Joseph is that most times God will put us in uncomfortable situations. Joseph had everything going well for him at first, and then suddenly a shift happens which caused trouble for him. He was sold into slavery by his brothers; he remained faithful and wouldn't sleep with his master's wife. Joseph stood his ground and God elevated him and his glory shined throughout the nations. His brothers, who sold him into slavery, came back to bow at his feet.

That's how God works wonders in our lives, and He makes our

enemies bow at our feet. Thus, when the King of Kings is at work, you become a victor. The story of Joseph was quite challenging because he underwent loads of frustrations at first, but to God, it was just a test. We can learn from his story to always stay true to our purpose.

As the saying goes, all work and no play make Jack a dull boy. Work hard. Play hard. Setting time apart from work to spend quality time with your family is a huge factor to consider. Focusing too much on work, versus spending quality time with your family, can have a negative effect in the long run.

### ***Deal with Anxiety***

Anxiety is defined as a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. Anxiety is an emotion that everyone experiences from time to time. Constant worrying takes a heavy toll on the negative side. You may believe that your constant worrying is harmful, that it's going to drive you crazy, affect your physical health, or you may worry that you're going to lose all control over your worrying—that it will take over and never stop.

Telling yourself to stop worrying doesn't work—at least not for long. You can distract yourself or suppress anxious thoughts for a moment, but you can't banish them for good. Trying to do so often makes them stronger and more persistent. Postponing worrying is effective because it breaks the habit of dwelling on worries in the present moment. Yet there is no struggle to suppress the thought or judge it. You simply save it for later.



As you develop the ability to postpone your anxious thoughts, you'll start to realize that you have more control over your worrying than you think. Thinking about all the things that could go wrong doesn't make life any more predictable. You may feel safer when you're worrying, but it's just an illusion. Focusing on worst-case scenarios won't keep bad things from happening. It will only keep you from enjoying the good things you have in the present. So, if you want to stop worrying, start by tackling your need for certainty and immediate answers.

The truth is, God is in control. He goes with us into our darkest hours. We have someone to turn to, someone more powerful than anyone and anything on earth. Whatever we fear, whatever we've done, and whatever has been done to us, we have a place to go and seek wisdom. For anyone who has ever dealt with stress, worry, or anxiety, you know how tormenting it can be when it grabs hold. Without God in control, we are left vulnerable for torments to grab a hold of us.

# THE BLUEPRINT TO SUCCESS

# CHAPTER 12

## BUILDING SELF IMAGE

### *Be Yourself*

Being true to the best version of yourself is not a onetime event. It is a constant decision you make every day or even every hour. Lying isn't you; pretending is not you either. Making up nonsense and hiding your true self, none of that is you. This is not stuff that makes up your identity. Your true self is made up of beautiful qualities. You can choose to shine a light on them or hide them, but you are made of good stuff, regardless.

*“There is but one cause of failure and that is a man's lack of faith in his true self.” – William James*

When you are by yourself, there's nobody around to impress; no one to analyze. It's just you, and because of that, you don't focus on yourself, but on what you're doing. This is the answer to how to be yourself all the time. Shut down your inner clamoring for approval and focus on being present in the external world. You'll have a lot more fun.

When you act like yourself, compared to managing your image, some people will like you more and some will like you less, but that's the way it should be. Do not worry about how others see you, if you do, it will unnaturally alter your behavior and probably make you seem insecure.

Therefore, when you let go of the old ways of thinking, follow your bliss, and do what you love, you will begin to align with happiness and peace. These are all indicators proving you are connected with your true nature. You are then allowing your real self to shine forth in all its glory.

### ***Go Beyond Your Limit***

We need to understand two kinds of limits: Physical and Mental Limits.

*Mental Limits* are the best since whatever you keep mentally, stays mentally; they are imaginary. With a mental limit, there's a very huge chance of accomplishing your dream.

*Physical Limits* are with "physical limits." It's referred to as fragile. It's destructive and poses a form of physical limitation. For example, an athlete who is used to running 100m or 200m relay race, can't see himself running 1,500m. This is a work of physical limitation.

I would like to expatiate more on the physical limit. Physical limit is like a fog which covers a particular area and leaves another area uncovered. It's something temporary; they are not permanent. When you break through the fog, you experience how temporary they are; thus, when you break through the physical limit, you start putting the "Power of I can" into action.

I could not run this far, now I can. I could not drive this car, now I can. One secret to breaking physical limits is to keep doing it. I know most times it could be very challenging at first.

It could be tough, but persistence is key. When you keep at it, you'll get better and better and then you break the barrier. Because once you do something that you used to think was impossible, you will feel a sense of satisfaction deep down within you.

One of the secrets athletes use isn't physical, it's mental. Thus, in most games, matches, or competitions, mental limit comes to play. They understand for a fact that they must push themselves past a point where they have initially stopped. They also accept the fact that pain is a part of a workout. You can't find your limits without testing them, and you can't test them unless you are willing to push through soreness. If your breath is okay and you are not injured, then you are probably fine to keep going.

You are greater, a lot greater than you think you are. Therefore, today, right now, write down one thing you are going to do until it hurts. Any place is a good place to start as long as you get started. Just go do it.

No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that God will never let you down. He will never let you be pushed past your limit; He will always be there to help you come through it.

You have to find yourself in God's gym, lifting heavy spiritual weights and doing all manner of uncomfortable new exercises. Don't worry about the stretching part, He's doing that too. God's stretching is sometimes as painful on our souls as working over a sour muscle. God has a purpose for everything

He does. Take confidence knowing that He's stretching you so you can hold more of His power, gain more of His wisdom, more of His character, more of Him.

He wants to increase your influence and enlarge your territory. "Patience is more than Endurance." A saint's life is in the hands of an archer. God does not heed; He goes on stretching till His purpose is in sight, then He lets us fly. Trust yourself in God's hands. Maintain your relationship with Jesus Christ by the patience of faith. "Though He slays me, yet will I trust in Him." Amen.

### ***Make Your Own Decisions***

If you allow others to make decisions for you, instead of making your own decisions, then they are running your life. In effect, you're giving them control and you are living the life they think you should have. If you committed to something in the past that is no longer useful for you, you are allowed to give up that commitment. Changing your mind may be the first step to changing your life and learning something new.

There will be very few occasions when you are certain about everything. You will consistently be called upon to make decisions with limited information. That being the case, your goal should not be to eliminate the uncertainty, instead you must develop the art of being clear in the face of uncertainty. Different people will likely have different information and perspectives that can give you a broader understanding of the situation.

Good decision making is a combination of using your emotions and being rational, this is because your emotions impact the decisions you make. Keeping your emotions in check and arming yourself with the necessary information you need will allow your unconscious thinking to make better decisions. You should think about the best and worst outcomes that can happen as a result of your decision. You should also consider what will happen if you do not decide at all (which is a decision in itself). Whatever type of decision we face, there are biblical principles that can help us make better decisions.

### ***Finish What You Start***

God will only bless what He started! If He started it, He will finish it! If God lit the FIRE, no one can put it out. “He will open doors for you no man can shut!” Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will finish. However, if you have a habit of starting many new things but not finishing them, that’s something to look into. Many people get stuck in the *thinking* but not *doing* phase, and that’s not good because your goals won’t magically get completed without you taking action.

I would like to share some tips which may give guidance in the process of you finishing what you have started.

- Give yourself a deadline – Remember the smart goals; make a plan of action and make your goals realistic and achievable. Get some support and accountability to make sure you don’t get stuck behind mental hurdles, it’s not “successes” you’re counting at this point, rather specific

efforts you can realistically make.

- Know what you can handle – Only you know you; you know your abilities. Deep down within you, you know what you are capable of, therefore only set targets you can hit. Don't put so much on your plate if you know you can't accomplish it all. Take it one step at a time, day by day, and success will be yours.

*Getting organized in the normal routines of life and finishing little projects you've started is an important first step toward realizing larger goals. If you can't get a handle on the small things, how will you ever get it together to focus on the big things? –Joyce Meyer*

- Speak with people who have walked the same path before you and learn from their mistakes. Let me ask you some questions: Do you want to be an Author? Do you want to write a test? Do you want to travel to a new country? Do you want to embark on a Project? Do you want to build a house?

If you can answer “Yes” to these questions, then why not seek the help of a professional or speak with someone around you who has been through that route before. By doing this, you will be better prepared and know what's expected of you and how you should go about it.

- Don't put too much pressure on yourself. IT is important to understand that “The Lord who has started His work will finish.” Our God is not a halfway God. Whatever He starts, He will finish. Why not put your hope, faith, and trust in God? With hard work, consistency, dedication, and prayer,



you will finish what you started.

### *Humility*

Humility is a quality by which a person, considering his defects, has a humble opinion of himself and willingly submits himself to God and others for God's sake. Humility is the quality of being courteously respectful of others.

Most of the humility that drives success comes from asking questions and seeking out those who could give quality and trustworthy advice. Learning from others, not being afraid to make your own mistakes, and admitting when you are wrong means that you didn't have an ego standing in the way of your success.

Success is a journey, not a destination. When you become successful, don't rest on your laurels, because when you compete against others, it's easy to emphasize winning over self-improvement. However, when you compete against yourself, you both win.

In the valley, Peter looks big. In the mountain of transfiguration, Peter looks small. There are levels where you must humble yourself and become like a little child; be still and know that God is God. There are levels where you shouldn't interject your opinion or tell God what ought to be done, but you hold your peace. This is a moment of worship – humility.

In the scripture, David associates success with prayer; not power, force, or anger. Let me ask you a question, *do you associate success with talent, ability, influence, recognition, or*

*money?* The worst thing that could happen to you is to engage in a battle without God. You have to be sure that the King of Kings is on your side, because it's not about you, it's about God. Not only must you do it, but you must also do it God's way to get victory in your life. God doesn't ensure victory when He's not consulted.

Your beauty should not come from outward adornments, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.

A big part of humility is knowing our limits, our strengths, and weakness, moral or otherwise. Don't let success go to your head. Be quick to apologize for your mistakes. You'll learn nothing or impress anyone by making excuses and diverting blame. And a little humility will remind you you're human.

Most people who practice humility channel their energy on other people, they put other people first; they have a genuine interest in other people. Humble people focus more on others, there's usually less pressure to be perfect, they try within their capacity to help others. As John Wooden said, "Talent is God given. Be humble. Fame is man-given. Be grateful. Conceit is self-given. Be careful."

Pride is an issue with most people in the world today, as we can see from these bible verses, I discussed under this session. Most of us believe we can do things on our own. We believe we don't need God to take the wheel. Most times the Lord is merciful and gracious. He allows us to make our decisions and

mistakes, just like the story of the prodigal son in the bible. After losing everything, he went back home, and his father received him, and he regained all that he lost.

Statistics prove humble people excel as leaders. They usually shine in professional settings because they give credit where it is due and are open to collaboration. Humility makes people better employees and bosses. Humility makes relationships better.

The truth is all the money in the world doesn't make you a better person. It simply means you have more money. Real wealth is achieved by appreciating what you already have in life.

While confidence is essential, it's important to stay humble. People respond well to humility because it shows you place yourself at the same level as them, and not above them. Having high self-control is one key to a successful life because an obsession with the self can paradoxically lead to lower self-control.

Let me ask you a question, *why are you still sitting on your horse when you have to get down?* Jesus, Naaman, Joseph all humbled themselves. You seem to care about your image more than your deliverance, but if you're willing to get down low enough just like a seed, God will heal that issue in your life, because the easiest way to go up is to go down.

Humility is the way to exaltation. Humble people tend to exhibit kindness. Most people often think kindness is a sign of weakness, but kindness can go a long way. Research reveals being kind also makes you happier. It feels good to be nice and

help others as it can make you happier. When kindness is displayed, people like you better. Being nice doesn't just help others, but it can help you too. Be humble.

Humility is a sign of strength, not weakness. People with humility possess inner peace. They're modest about their achievements, grounded in their values, and they have nothing to prove to others. One characteristic of humble people is that they admit their mistakes, especially when they are wrong. Find a way to believe that other people might be better than you at something, because in the long run, they might teach you to be better at a particular skill.

In the Bible, humility is a quality of being courteously respectful of others, it's a modest or low view of one's importance. Humility allows you to put others first and try all you can to meet the needs and demands of others. It is something that happens naturally as we equate truth with honesty.

*“These are the few ways we can practice humility:*

*To speak as little as possible of one's self.*

*To mind one's own business.*

*Not wanting to manage other people's affairs.*

*To avoid curiosity.*

*To accept contradictions and correction cheerfully.*

*To pass over the mistakes of others.*

*To accept insults and injuries.*

*To accept being slighted, forgotten, and disliked.*

*To be kind and gentle even under provocation.*

*Never to stand on one's dignity.*

*To choose always the hardest.”*

– *Mother Teresa*

We are always being led by God to become more honest in our lives. When we lack humility, we may often find ourselves humiliated. The challenge is that most of us want to feel that we have some power and importance in our own lives.

Here are a few points we have to place at the back of our minds to practice humility effectively:

- Don't compare yourself with others; this is one of the most important principles in life. You are wonderfully made. The almighty created you uniquely. You have a divine talent that no man on planet earth has. Scientifically, no two people on planet earth have the same fingerprint. This principle prevents competition and creates a sense of satisfaction in who you are.
- Keep learning, don't act arrogant, don't act as if you know it all, and stay open to learning. Learning allows you to grow and be the best you can be. Don't take anything for granted. You should likewise be grateful for the hardships and challenges you have faced, because it has made you into the person you are today.
- Let other people feel good about themselves. Praise others, especially for a job well done. Make people feel good about themselves. Get in the habit of telling other people when they're doing great at something. This can make both you and the person feel great.
- Do unto others what you want them to do to you. I am a

firm believer that karma exists. There is a common saying, “Whatever you sow you will reap, whatever you plant you will harvest.”

*The Golden Rule* – Do to others as you would have them do to you.

# CHAPTER 13

## STAYING COMMITTED TO YOUR GOALS

### *Focus*

Focus is defined as the ability to adapt to the prevailing level of light, and to become able to see clearly. Also, it can be defined as the state or quality of having or producing clear visual definition.

It is important to believe in yourself and have confidence in your abilities. In the beginning it's easy, because you're focused on what you stand to gain from achieving your goal. As time goes on, you may gradually forget how excited you were and may lose that inner tone. To prevent this, create a visual image that represents your goals. Frequently, revisit and focus on these to remind yourself.

Most people believe *to focus* means saying yes to everything given to you to focus on. But that's not what it means at all. It means saying no to the hundred other good ideas there are. Pick carefully.

*"I'm as proud of the things we haven't done as the things I have done. Innovation is saying no to 1,000 things."*

– Steve Jobs

Trust the process, not some distant illusory goal. Create one

primary focus for each area of your life and commit to taking action on that every day: be it your health, relationships, financial, career, spiritual, personal, contribution. Each area of your life is important. Try not to neglect any of them. Life sometimes gets in the way and priorities change. It's difficult to feel satisfied and successful if you are neglecting key areas of your life.

Make a list with your focus areas and do them every day until they become a habit. Look at that list daily and mark a calendar showing that you spend time on each part of your level for that day. If you neglected an area, then make that your first activity for the following morning.

A great life is built through daily actions, not lofty goals. Be determined and trust in your eventual success and your ability to achieve it is also a great start; but you also have to be determined to make it happen! Sometimes determination ends up being the key life skill that leads to success. You are capable of success in every area of your life. It's not about talent or luck, it's about learning and applying certain life skills, monitoring your results, and making minor adjustments in your approach.

We must focus our eyes, attention, desires on Jesus, he's the only one that can bring us into fellowship with heaven and restore us to the rightful place that we will forever possess. This is what shapes our present and our future.



## *Commitment*

Commitment is defined as the state, or quality of being dedicated to a cause or activity. Commitment is essential to being a winner and achieving our loftiest goals. Being dedicated and committed is a part of growing and transcending to the next level. Each of us comes from diverse backgrounds and is dedicated to different values as well as involved in countless missions.

A primary key to knowing we are committed is when we are willing to make sacrifices to achieve our goals. Commitment through sacrifice also relates to the concept of loyalty. Additionally, we must be determined, which means we accept and perceive these challenges as a part of the journey toward the larger accomplishment we are committed to. Look deep inside yourself and begin examining what ignites your passion for life right now. Explore this area as an area of commitment.

Make plans and daydream about what you're going to do when you achieve your goal. Whatever it is, regularly thinking about your plans for your life after you've achieved your goals is a powerful way to stay motivated. It allows you to renew that initial excitement you had when you first set out to achieve your goals.

*“Commitment unlocks the doors of imagination, allows vision, and gives us the ‘right stuff’ to turn our dreams into reality.”*

*– James Womack*

*“It’s not about money or connections – it’s the willingness to outwork and out learn everyone... And if it fails, you learn from what happened and do a better job next time.” – Mark Cuban*

*“A difficult time can be more readily endured if we retain the conviction that our existence holds a purpose – a cause to pursue, a person to love, a goal to achieve.” – John Maxwell*

Let me ask you a question, *what does it mean to be committed to something?* Commitment goes beyond “merely being interested” in something. To commit to something means blocking out other alternatives while focusing all your attention and efforts onto one definitive objective. This is important because this “focus of attention” provides a sense of certainty that specific outcomes will be realized.

When you commit to something, you might not always know what you’re getting yourself into; however, you do, at the very least, recognize the sacrifices you must make in order to follow through with your actions. When you are committed to something, you have a very clear idea of what lies ahead on your journey, the sacrifices you must make, the resources you must acquire, and how you will respond to the challenges that await.

## ***Sacrifice***

Sacrifice is the act of giving up something highly valued for

the sake of something else considered to have a greater value or claim.

*“If you’re going to try, go all the way. Otherwise don’t even start. This could mean losing girlfriends, wives, relatives, and maybe even your mind. It could mean not eating for three or four days. It could mean freezing on a park bench. It could mean jail. It could mean derision. It could mean mockery— isolation. Isolation is a gift. All the others are a test of your endurance of how much you want to do it, you will do it despite rejection and the worst odds. And it will be better than anything else you can imagine. If you’re going to try, go all the way. There is no other feeling like that. You will be alone with the gods, and the nights will flame with fire. You will ride life straight to perfect laughter. It’s the only good fight there is.”*

—Charles Bukowski, *Factotum*

The denial of the law of sacrifice keeps a man from progressing in life. To reach your goals you must move forward, which necessitates leaving some things behind. The man who believes he can get whatever he desires without sacrifice tries to hold on to everything in an attempt to have it all. Instead of moving forward, he is stretched out horizontally and sitting on the fence.

*“I’m saying to be a hero means you step across the line willing to make a sacrifice, so heroes always make sacrifices. Heroes always take a risk. Heroes are always deviant. Heroes always doing something that most people don’t and we want to change – I want to democratize heroism to say any of us can be a*

*hero.” – Philip Zimbardo*

Many of us want to succeed but don't want to put in the necessary effort to accomplish the dream. Success does not come naturally. You have to be willing to work harder than you ever have before; willing to lose sleep, skip some of the important things you usually do, and be dedicated to your goal. Place everything you have on the line to achieve your goal and become successful.

To be successful in life, you have to pay the price – that's Sacrifice. You need to understand that in the process of accomplishing your dreams; think about yourself and others as well, especially your family, close friends, and people who have been there for you since day one. Realize that at the end of the day, Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity. Many people have grown up in a family where either of their caregivers put their work ahead of the family. Understanding the power of sacrifice and using it to your advantage will be a powerful weapon to accomplishing your dream.

### ***Meditation***

Meditation is a practice where an individual trains the mind or induces a mode of consciousness, either to realize some benefit or for the mind to acknowledge its content without becoming identified with that content, or as an end in itself. The term meditation refers to a broad variety of practices that includes techniques designed to promote relaxation, build internal energy or life force, and develop compassion, love, patience, generosity, and forgiveness. An ambitious form of meditation

aims at effortlessly sustained single-pointed concentration meant to enable its practitioner to enjoy an indestructible sense of well-being, while engaging in any life activity.

Nowadays some researchers believe meditation might be a key to success. This is because they believe the key to perfection lies in the mind. The more you know about your mind, the greater the mastery you will have over the world around you, and it can also create anything it wishes. It has enormous space to store its unlimited experiences and keep them as long as it likes. Meditation is to dive within, beyond thought, to the source of thought and pure consciousness. It enlarges the container every time you transcend. When you come out, you come out refreshed, filled with energy and enthusiasm.

According to a researcher theory at the University of Iowa, U.S.A., in the highly integrated mind, connections between various regions of the brain are strong, attention is keen, and the brain is quick to spring into action when faced with a question. A strong belief that meditation strengthens the regions of the brain: *“This life that has been given to us as a gift, as such a precious gift. To try to understand and recognize it is the greatest meditation. Through the media of this Knowledge, we can tap into our inner sources that are so beautiful.”* –Prem Rawat

To learn to know yourself, you need to take a few minutes for yourself every day, especially in early mornings when your mind is fresh; comparing your mind to a quiet breeze. Establish a relationship with your mind on the same basis. Create quiet time for yourself and your mind will become settled enough to activate the power of meditation. Most times, we know what is

right and feel motivated to do it. We also know what is wrong, but we do not know how to stop doing it. This happens because the contents in the unconscious mind keep influencing our conscious mind.

### *Practice*

Practice is the act of rehearsing a behavior or engaging in an activity continuously, to improve or master it, as in the phrase “Practice Makes Perfect.”

It is a method of learning and acquiring experience. It can be the one thing to hold you back and leave you wondering why others are so much better at some things than others.

“Take chances, make mistakes. That’s how you grow. Pain nourishes your courage. You have to fail to practice being brave,” –Mary Tyler Moore

It’s important not to confuse hard work and practice, and vice versa. Hard work and deliberate practice are a mind game, and the one who knows how to serve the mind can utilize it for his optimum benefit and make the most out of it. Hard work is about doing something that may not directly inspire you but is necessary for you to achieve your goal, such as preparing for your graduate program, driving, pursuing a long-term degree program, and so on. An excellent example is athletes who train continuously over time to master a specific skill. Practice is a powerful weapon of success. The reason practice is so powerful is that the brain produces change.

*“For every finish-line tape a runner breaks – complete with the*

*cheers of the crowd and the clicking of hundreds of cameras – there are the hours of hard and often lonely work that rarely gets talked about.” – Grete Waitz*

A study of London taxi drivers discovered that the area of the brain governing spatial navigation is substantially larger than non-taxi drivers. I believe this is because they have been exposed to different addresses over time, and it comes to a point when you call or stop a taxi and you tell them where you are going to, they immediately know the exact location and address. That is the power of consistent practice.

*“I never stay away from workouts. I work hard. I’ve tried to take care of my body. I’ll never look back and say that I could have done more. I’ve paid the price in practice, but I know I get the most out of my ability.” – Carl Yastrzemski*

During your academic years, you can recall some of your teachers who were very good at the specific subject they taught; this is due to the power of consistency through practice. Since they have practiced, recalled, integrated, and explained a topic continuously over time, the brain associated with long-term memory, usually the Hippocampus, has changed. Therefore, they can teach with ease and master the course work easily.

Using the power of consistent practice to your advantage will serve as a key to unlock your door to greatness. Also, under the power of practice, I would like us to discuss one of the key elements of practice – consistency.

Consistency is defined as the act of adhering to the same principle, course, or form. Being consistent is essential if you

want to make any significant change in your life. It's also a must-have skill if you're looking forward to being a success in every aspect of your life.

*“If you're not hopeful and optimistic, then you just give up. You have to take the long hard look and just believe that if you're consistent, you will succeed.” – John Lewis*

As humans, we have a strong tendency to want to be consistent with what we have done before, that's one reason why we tend to stick with an old attitude. You have probably realized that consistency is important for making progress, doing better work, getting in shape, and achieving some level of success in most areas of life.

*“In essence, if we want to direct our lives, we must take control of our consistent actions. It's not what we do once in a while that shapes our lives, but what we do consistently.”*

*–Tony Robbins.*

We are all used to our routines. They are more than just what we do every day; they are a source of comfort for most people.



# CHAPTER 14

## CONFIDENCE AND CHOICE OF ROLE MODELS

### *Self Confidence*

Self Confidence relates to self-assurance in one's judgment, ability, and power. Others admire self-confident people and inspire confidence in others. They are head on and tend to be risk-takers; they stay away from negativity and bring positivity; they never give up nor accept failure.

Sometimes it's hard to develop confidence, either because of personal experiences that have caused you to lose confidence or if you suffer from low self-esteem. You will never feel confident if you have negative thoughts running through your mind telling you that you are a failure, reasons why you can't make it, the struggles you have to encounter, your painful past, and your defeats.

Always remember to put your trust in the Lord, in days and periods of trouble He is your shield and your defender. With the help of the almighty, you will conquer any obstacles standing in your way of progress.

Moses later understood the principle of self-confidence, in the book of Genesis, due to his previous low self-esteem. After looking at Moses' reluctance, it is hard to believe that this is the same man who stood before Pharaoh to lead the children of

Israel as they crossed the Red Sea. Moses was empowered by the Lord, had he not been self-confident, he would have failed to accomplish his purpose in life.

Many people downplay their successes and focus on the things they struggle with. This is a mistake. Always remind yourself of your past accomplishments, no matter how small they may be. Take time to think about what you want out of life. As your confidence grows and you become successful, avoid feeling or acting superior to others. Give others credit for their work, use compliments and praise sincerely. Be courteous and polite, showing an interest in what others are doing, ask questions, and get involved.

Remember, you are a unique individual, created in the image of the Most-high God. You are created for success. You are a living testimony; the glory of your heavenly father is radiating in your life. Keep the fire burning and you will go places you have never dreamed of. It is also good to know that many paths lead to one road. No one can give you faith or choose what you should believe. Therefore, when you undertake any endeavor having a conscious or unconscious belief that you're not worthy of doing it, you will find that you are unable to move forward.

### ***Role Model***

A role model is a person whose behavior, examples, or success is emulated by others, especially by younger people. A role model is a person who serves as an example by influencing others. For many children, the most important role models are

their parents and caregivers.

The ideals of “a family” are one of the most basic models of what a better world can be like. In a perfect family, the members are joined by bonds of love; they are a team, helping each other meet all their physical and emotional needs. Of course, no family is perfect, but a family that strives together to become a “family for a better world” can help each member feel more fulfilled, as well as better about themselves and the world around them. They also provide a real-life example of how the human family can work together to create a better world.

A person’s chosen role models may have a considerable impact on his or her career opportunities and choices. The suitability of a role model depends, in part, on the admirer’s perceived commonality with the model who should provide an image of an ambitious, yet realistic, goal. In most cases, children may want to copy the behavior of a role model of their interest ranging from the likes of celebrities, educators, professors, successful business people, artists, preachers, volunteers, and other professionals.

There are many ways that those we admire impact our lives. They help us learn to carry ourselves with pride and confidence, teach us better ways to handle different situations, show us how to treat others, and help us stay connected to a faith that supports our spiritual life.

It is good to know that there are two kinds of role models; those who influence you positively and those who influence you negatively.

One of the greatest aspects of a positive role model is the fullness in which it can affect your life. Positive role models play a vital role in inspiring kids to learn, overcome obstacles, and understand that they can live out positive values each day.

A role model who supports and guides you in career decisions will probably have many other positive traits to share with you. Tapping into their perspective and experience will guide you through many of life's challenges. Keep your eyes open and you will discover the guidance you need may be right in front of you.

Negative role models, however, may also influence children. Sometimes widely admired public figures can make poor personal choices. Young children may assume that the behaviors of negative role models are typical, safe, and acceptable. Children may come to view the behavior of negative role models as safe, conventional, and acceptable, causing them to normalize negative behavior, such as violence, sexism, or racism.

# CHAPTER 15

## SUCCESS STRATEGIES

### *Practice Empathic Listening*

Empathic listening (also called active listening or reflective listening) is a way of listening and responding to another person who improves mutual understanding and trust. Empathy is defined as the ability to sense other people's emotions, coupled with the ability to imagine what someone else might think or feel. Empathic listening is not an easy skill to master, mainly because most of us (myself included) would rather talk than listen. It's more difficult than basic listening because empathic listening is often required when the speaker is in pain, angry, or upset.

I have learned through time that we have to listen to each other, even when we don't agree, and especially when we think we hate each other. We have to listen to each other's narratives. Not interrupt defensively, or with hostility, but try to open our hearts and listen with empathy. It was a very difficult thing to do and one of the best things that I ever did in my life.

Listening responsively is always worthwhile as a way of letting people know that you care about them. It's a sure way to let people know that you respect their opinion and you are listening to them, as this makes them feel pretty good about

themselves. Therefore, don't talk, listen when somebody else is talking and listen to what they are saying. Do not interrupt, talk over them, or finish their sentences for them. Stop; just listen. When the other person has finished talking, you may need to clarify to ensure you have received their message accurately.

There are times when we must remain silent for the moment, and then there are times when we must verbally address a certain issue with a person. When that time comes, don't be afraid to speak up, but be sure to use "Godly wisdom" when you do.

It is also good to know that there are different types of listeners, good and poor listeners. The problem with poor listeners is not only that they are perceived as rude, but that they miss out on important knowledge. Empathic Listening is a huge advantage for people in all works of life, because using it to your advantage allows you to pay attention to small details and allows you to grow in all aspect of life, ranging from your personal life, to your professional life, as a student, in the military, and so on.

### ***Understanding the Power of The Brain***

The brain is an organ of soft nervous tissue contained in the skull of vertebrates, functioning as the coordinating center of sensation and intellectual and nervous activity.

The brain is the most complex part of the human body. This three-pound organ is the seat of intelligence, interpreter of the

senses, initiator of body movement, and controller of behavior. Lying in its bony shell and washed by protective fluid, the brain is the source of all the qualities that define our humanity. The brain is the crown jewel of the human body. Researchers have been able to identify correlates of intelligence within the brain and its functioning. These include overall brain volume, gray matter volume, white matter volume, white matter integrity, cortical thickness, and Neural Efficiency.

All the parts of the brain work together, but each part has its special properties. The brain can be divided into three basic units: the forebrain, the midbrain, and the hindbrain. The forebrain is the largest and most highly developed part of the human brain; it consists primarily of the cerebrum and the structures hidden beneath. The uppermost part of the brainstem is the midbrain, which controls some reflex actions and is part of the circuit involved in the control of eye movements and other voluntary movements. The hindbrain controls the body's vital functions, such as respiration and heart rate. The cerebellum coordinates movement and is involved in learned rote movements.

The brain, and the rest of the nervous system, are composed of many different types of cells, but the primary functional unit is a cell called the neuron. All sensations, movements, thoughts, memories, and feelings are the result of signals that pass-through neurons. Scientifically, it was found that on average, the human brain has 86bn neurons. Scientists have also learned a great deal about neurons by studying the synapse, the place where a signal passes from the neuron to another cell, also not one [of the brains] that were looked at so far has the 100bn.

Even though it may sound like a small difference, the 14bn neurons amount to the number of neurons that a baboon brain has or almost half the number of neurons in the gorilla brain. That is a pretty large difference. Also, it has been stated that throughout our lifetime, people on average only use 10% of their brains, leaving 90% unused.

I will like us to understand two things, they are the Short term and Long-term memory:

**Short Term Memory:** It can be thought of as the ability to remember and process information at the same time. It holds a small amount of information (typically around 7 items or even less) in an active, readily available state for a short period (typically from 10 to 15 seconds, or sometimes up to a minute). However, this information will quickly disappear forever unless we make a conscious effort to retain it.

Short-term memory is a necessary step toward the next stage of retention, long-term memory. Also, from research. It is usually assumed that the short-term memory spontaneously decays over time, typically in the region of 10 - 15 seconds, but items may be kept for up to a minute depending on the content. However, it can be extended by repetition or rehearsal, either by reading items out loud or by mental simulation so that the information re-enters the short-term store and is retained for a further period.

**Long Term Memory:** The transfer of information to long-term memory for more permanent storage can be facilitated or improved by the mental repetition of the information or, even more effectively, by giving it a meaning and associating it with



other previously acquired knowledge. Knowing and understanding the ability of the brain will allow us to appreciate this special organ.

### *Using Failure to Your Advantage*

Failure is the state or condition of not meeting a desirable or intended objective and may be viewed as the opposite of success or a person or thing that proves unsuccessful.

One of the biggest roadblocks to success is the fear of failure. Fear of failure is worse than failure itself because it condemns you to a life of unrealized potential. The actions you take in the face of failure are critical to your ability to recover from it, and they have huge implications for how others view you and your mistakes. There are actions you must take when you fail that allow you to bounce back from failure.

Most times the success is a product of repeated failure with consistency, persistence, and hard work; you can become whatever you choose to be. This may be hard at first, but when you see any barrier as an opportunity to trigger you to the next level, you have a greater chance to excel far beyond your expectations. So many of us invest a fortune making ourselves look good to the world, yet on the inside, we are falling apart.

We are not always in control of what goes on in our minds, but we can determine what stays there. When we tap into the eternal power of God on the inside of us, rather than looking for what's on the outside, we will be true victors in life. When the passion on the inside becomes greater than the obstacle on

the outside, you will always win.

Let me share a story with you of the Great Thomas Edison. Thomas Alva Edison, born on February 11, 1847, was an American inventor and businessman. He developed many devices that greatly influenced life around the world, including the phonograph, the motion picture camera, and the long-lasting practical electric light bulb.

Thomas Edison reportedly failed 10,000 times while he was inventing the light bulb. He was quoted as saying, “I have found 10,000 ways something won’t work. I am not discouraged, because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward.”

You have to understand that it is time to invest in what is going on inside. When we can do that, the outside will shine. It is very important that you don’t let failure make you timid, take enough time to absorb the lessons of your failure just like Thomas Edison and as soon as you’ve done that, get right back out there and try again.

Most times you are trying to convince God you can’t handle it. He’s trying to show you it was never in your control. There are specific dreams and desires that God has placed in your heart. They didn’t just randomly show up; the Creator of the universe put them in you; they are a part of your divine destiny.

Here’s a story of one of the richest and most successful men in business, Bill Gates. Before Microsoft was born, Bill Gates suffered a failure in business. Known today to be one of the wealthiest men in the world, Bill Gates’s upper-middle-class family is a stark contrast from some of the other successful

failures out there who didn't have well-off parents.

However, Bill Gates didn't rely on his family. His business acumen was second to none. Though Gates failed at his first business, it didn't discourage him from trying again. He didn't want to give up because the sheer notion of business intrigued him. He was cleverly able to put together a company that revolutionized the personal computing marketplace. And we all know just how successful that was for him.

There will be complications, some things won't add up until time passes by. The taste of tears will season every success. Discouragement will come, but your determination will push it away. The lessons your wounds carry will become your companion. The endurance your heart gains will be evidence that convinces you, you were created to be stronger. Don't expect to win every time. Look at the list of the all-time greats, in one specific area or the other, in sport, entertainment, education, and in every other aspect, they have all encountered failure at one point or another. What distinguished them was their ability to come back, work harder, and succeed far beyond your expectations.

### ***Prioritize, Organize, and Set Goals***

As the saying goes, all work and no play make jack a dull boy. Work hard, Play hard. Setting apart time you don't work and spending quality time with your family is a huge thing you have to put into consideration. Focusing too much on work and not spending quality time with your family can have a negative effect in the long run.

### ***Work Out***

Working out has a lot of benefits, ranging from a reduction of stress to keeping fit. Exercise can quickly elevate a person's perception of his or her attractiveness; exercise improves self-confidence, regardless of weight, size, gender, or age. Another fact is exercise can help preserve effective brain function, as it boosts essential chemicals in the brain and prevents the degeneration of essential parts.

### ***Education***

Education is a very important issue to emphasize when we talk about success. It shows your level of competence as a person; it shows you can learn and apply the ideas and information you have learned to achieve your goal and become successful. Most employers at this present age lay a lot of emphasis on education. This means the more education you have, the likelier you are to become more successful, the more money you will make, and the more advantages you will have over lesser educated people.

I want to share the story of a famous neurosurgeon, Benjamin Solomon Carson, who was born in Detroit, Michigan, on September 18, 1951. He was the second son of Sonya and Robert Solomon Carson. His mother was raised in Tennessee in a very large family and dropped out of school in the third grade. Ben was 8 and Curtis, his brother, was 10 when Sonya began to raise them as a single mother, reportedly moving to Boston to live with her sister for a time and eventually returning to Detroit.

The family was very poor, and to make ends meet Sonya sometimes toiled at two or three jobs simultaneously to provide for her boys. Most of the jobs she had were as a domestic worker. Both Carson and his brother experienced difficulties in school. Ben fell to the bottom of his class and became the object of ridicule by his classmates.

Determined to turn her sons around, Sonya limited their TV time to a few select programs and refused to let them go outside to play until they'd finished their homework. Ben learned how to use his imagination and found it more enjoyable than watching television. This attraction to reading soon led to a strong desire to learn more. Carson would later say that he began to view his prospects differently, that he could become the scientist or physician he had dreamed about.

Within a year, Carson amazed his teachers and classmates with his scholastic improvement. He graduated with honors from Southwestern, having also become a senior commander in the school's ROTC program. He earned a full scholarship to Yale, receiving a B.A. degree in psychology in 1973. Carson returned to Johns Hopkins in 1984, and by 1985 he became director of pediatric neurosurgery at the age of 33, the youngest U.S. physician to hold such a position.

In 1987, Carson attracted international attention by performing a surgery to separate 7-month-old occipital craniopagus twins in Germany. Patrick and Benjamin Binder were born joined at the head. Both survived the separation, allowing Carson's surgery to be considered, by the medical establishment, the first successful procedure of its kind.

Just like Ben Carson, education allows you to learn basic time management, application of the knowledge you learned by interacting with other people, also how to become a team player or end up being a team leader.

Most healthcare field requires certification to be able to practice. On the other hand, lack of education may be the root cause of poverty, crime, homelessness, obesity, and so on.

### ***Watch Your Tongue***

Medically, the tongue is a small part of the body, but it's been said that power of life and death lies in the tongue. You can create or destroy through the power of the tongue. You can proclaim words of favor, blessings, success, and prosperity into someone else's life via the power of the tongue; likewise, you can reign courses on people's life via the power of the tongue.

Therefore, be careful about which words you speak from your mouth, it can affect your spirit. And because it affects your spirit, it will affect your body and soul, thus affecting your whole existence.

### ***Dedication and Hard Work***

There is this belief I have had in mind since high school: *hard work, and dedication equals success*. Dedication is simply defined as the quality of being dedicated to a task or commitment, while hard work is the basis for everything worthwhile you will achieve in life. If work is applying your

ability, then hard work is applying your ability with focus and intensity to the exclusion of other possibilities.

Hard work and dedication changed the life of one of the great athletes of all time, Michael Jordan. MJ, as he is known, is widely considered to be the greatest basketball player of all time. He is arguably one of the greatest athletes of all time. He was a four-time gold medalist with USA Basketball, he also won two Olympic gold medals and was twice named the USA Basketball Male Athlete of the Year. For more than a decade, he was the face of the NBA.

Chairman Warren Buffett, the world's most premier investor, is famed for his discipline and the hours he spends studying financial statements of potential investment targets. The good news is that your lack of a natural gift is irrelevant – talent has little or nothing to do with greatness. You can make yourself into any number of things, and you can even make yourself great. One lesson we need to learn is that there is no substitute for hard work. The first major conclusion is that nobody is great without work. It is nice to believe that if you find the field where you are naturally gifted, you will do great from day one, but it doesn't happen. There's no evidence of high-level performance without experience or practice. Practice makes perfect.

Tiger Woods is a textbook example of what the research shows. His father introduced him to golf at an extremely early age – 18 months – and encouraged him to practice intensively. Woods had racked up at least 15 years of practice by the time he became the youngest-ever winner of the U.S. Amateur Championship at age 18. In line with the findings, he has never

stopped trying to improve, devoting many hours a day to conditioning and practice, even remaking his swing twice because that's what it took to get even better.

Many people look at success as having loads of money, nice cars, investments, or building big houses and net worth. Don't get me wrong, these things are nice and take hard work to get. However, I think when you have to push your mind and body to levels you didn't think are possible and have reached that point in your mind where you can't go anymore, but somehow you find the strength to push further beyond imagination. That's what you call success. On the other hand, lack of hard work and dedication can lead to failure because of a lack of will and passion to succeed.

### ***Honesty and Transparency***

Honesty means being good and truthful, transparent, thus showing or suggesting a good and truthful character. It depicts not hiding the truth about someone or something, not meant to deceive someone.

A common saying is that honesty is the best policy. Nowadays, it is one of the means of building relationships, businesses, and networks. People simply need to trust you with what they have. Once trust is established, then you are set on the path of having a long-lasting relationship.

On the other hand, transparency as used in science, engineering, business, the humanities, and in other social contexts implies openness, communication, and



accountability. Transparency is operating in such a way that it is easy for others to see what actions are performed.

The reason transparency is so appealing is largely due to cultural trends and human behavior. Naturally, human beings are attracted to transparent people. The value of transparency is about being a real person, a real leader, and a real company.

### ***Forget About the Struggles and Pain***

Talking about the struggles and pain, these have added up to you being who you are. God never promised that your life would always be good, but He did promise all things will work for your good for those who love Him. Your past does not determine your future. All the struggle and pain you've gone through leading up to this moment is a reflection of all you've overcome. No matter where you're currently at in life, there's always something or someone to be grateful for.

### ***Aim High***

Do you want to remain where you are, never learning, never changing, never growing? Some people become comfortable being where they are because they have everything easy on the ground; the lack of aiming high prevents growth and success. Success is yours.

### *Work on Your Weakness*

Weakness is simply defined as the state and condition of lacking strength.

This is challenging for most people. Without knowing, we channel a majority of energy on our strengths and neglects our weakness; when in fact, spending quality time on our weakness will make us even stronger both mentally and physically.

Let me give a brief example using sports. I have noticed a couple of times that opponents seem to explore one another's weaknesses and tend to use it to their advantage. There's some logic to the philosophy that training the weakness out of your body will make you stronger or faster, and to some extent that's true. What often happens is that in the process of training weakness out of our system, we neglect what got us to that point in the first place—our strengths—and we end up with a net-zero fitness improvement. Thus, one of the greatest lessons you learned is protecting yourself from yourself, you don't fall in love with your strength and neglect your weakness.

While capitalizing on your strengths is good advice, your ability to do that will be largely determined by how you handle your weaknesses. A dumb, unfocused athlete is unlikely to do as well as a smart one. An anti-social athlete will miss out on the chance to be part of a team. And an athlete who experiences spiritual chaos may lapse into drugs or steroid use, or immoral behavior that ultimately hurts his/her body.

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