



Spiritual Tools For Material Success

Dr. Amit Nagpal, Ph.D

"An Expert's step by step Guide to spiritual tools for prosperity"

Dedicated to my Mentor

Dr. Daisaku Ikeda

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Preface

Spiritual tools.....For Material Success....the name itself sounds like an oxymoron. How can spirituality be connected with materialism? Aren't both opposites? Isn't spirituality about connecting with self, soul searching and everything except money and isn't materialism about some unethical practices and prosperity at the cost of others?

I believe the chasm or divide created between spirituality and materialism is created by us and actually there is no divide. In fact once we understand that we can have fulfilling lives along with abundance (it takes time though, there are no shortcuts) through spiritual tools, our view of life will get upside down. We shall also find that there is a bright light at the end of tunnel which we could not see under the pressures and race we were busy in.

We can have money and peace and both in abundance. We only need to change our mindsets, understand our divine nature, discover our deepest passions (our life purpose), give our best and wait for the divine mercy which will surely bless us with unbelievable results.

So are you ready to take off. Remember to tighten your seatbelts, the journey seems tough in the beginning but when we take off, it's simply an adorable journey.....its just just divine.



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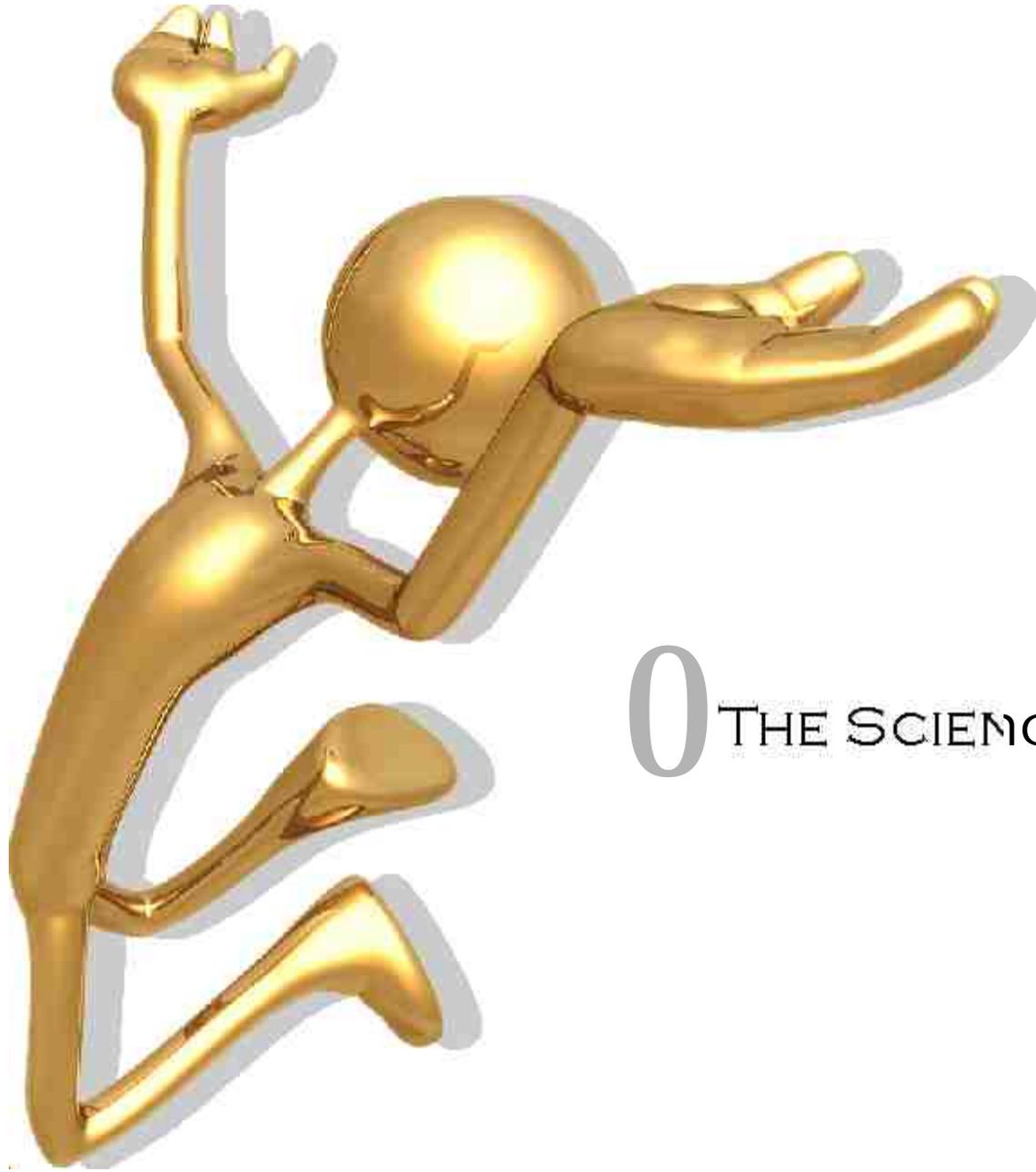
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0 THE SCIENCE of Spirituality



This chapter has a very critical role in the book and a clear cut purpose. Most of us tend to believe in science as logical and backed by evidence or experimentation. However, when it comes to spirituality, many of us consider it unscientific and a matter of blind faith.

I have gathered material in an attempt to prove that spirituality is a science. And I believe that if after reading this chapter, you are able to believe it is a science; half of the job is already done. Belief is very crucial for any kind of success and if you start Chapter 1 of this book with complete faith and conviction in spirituality and its

tools, you will be able to motivate yourself and achieve material success faster (with the help of the spiritual tools discussed here).

What Exactly is Spirituality?

Spirituality can refer to an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of his/her being; or the “deepest values and meanings by which people live. Spiritual practices, including meditation, prayer and contemplation, are intended to develop an individual's inner life; such practices lead to an experience of connectedness with a larger reality, yielding a more comprehensive self; with other individuals or the human community; with nature or the cosmos; or with the divine realm”. (Adapted from Wikipedia)

Is Spirituality a Science?

The common notion is that spirituality is based purely on faith in a God or 'higher power' which no one has seen. But in fact, one can be spiritual without believing in God. One can raise the levels of consciousness by using spiritual tools like meditation, chanting or silencing the mind.

In reality, spirituality is increasingly being accepted as a science and even laboratory experiments to prove the benefits of spiritual tools have been successfully conducted. India even has an organization called the "Indian Federation of Spiritual Scientists", which conducts a World Congress of Spiritual Scientists every year. Many celebrated scientists have also been the advocates of spirituality-ranging from Einstein and David Bohm to Dr APJ Abdul Kalam.

Meditation has been accepted by medical science for its various therapeutic benefits. And today, scientific research is being conducted which backs the benefits of spiritual tools. David Bohm, who had a series of meetings with the Dalai Lama, points out:-



"Meditation would even bring us out of all [the difficulties] we've been talking about. . . Somewhere we've got to leave thought behind, and come to this emptiness of manifest thought altogether. . . In other words, meditation actually transforms the mind. It transforms consciousness."

Many scientists have suggested a connection between consciousness and matter, drawing upon strict scientific regimens such as those in quantum physics. Examples are physicist-philosopher Fritjof Capra, theoretical nuclear physicist Amit Goswami (who views a universal consciousness as the ground of all existence - not matter); and Ervin László, who posits the "quantum vacuum" as the fundamental energy- and information-carrying field that informs not just the current universe, but all universes past and present.

The 'Center for Spirituality and the Mind' at the University of Pennsylvania is using brain imaging technology to examine and investigate how spiritual beliefs affect our health and behavior. Dr. Andrew Newberg, Director of the center says that they are looking at spirituality from a neurological point-of-view, from the brain-mind side.

Recent studies conducted at the center looked at the brains of Tibetan Buddhist monks in meditation and Franciscan nuns in prayer, then compared the results to their baseline brain activity levels. Both groups showed decreased activity in those parts of the brain which are involved with the sense of spatial orientation. This suggests the description of oneness with God, or transcendence experienced in meditation or prayer. It has also been proven that prayer and meditation increase levels of dopamine, or the brain's pleasure hormone.

I still don't Believe it

If you still don't believe that spiritual tools can help in material success, there is nothing to worry about. Just start the journey. Even Lord Buddha warned 2,500 years ago, "Do not believe anything because I have told you it is so. Only believe it when you have tested it for yourself." I therefore suggest

that the reader form a hypothesis that meditation practice enhances awareness, for example, and then do personal experiments in meditation to find out the results for yourself.

A Word of Caution

Material success is much easier using short cuts and unethical means (though we ultimately end up with stress and no happiness due to the resulting insecurities). Whereas material success with spiritual tools is much slower, it provides true happiness besides improving our wisdom, awareness, clarity of thinking, intuition and so on.

Though some people achieve faster results in meditation, others are slower. We have discussed a simple technique of meditation viz. *chanting* which is a very simple method for the common person. If one chants for half an hour every day for six months (you can do it when commuting, for example), I can assure you will become a 'meditation addict' as you find improvement in all spheres of life.

The only thing which is critical (to experience real benefits of meditation) is to remove all negative emotions and thoughts, which is not difficult to do if you develop the determination. The negative thoughts and emotions cannot be completely removed but one has to develop alertness towards them and discourage them strongly.

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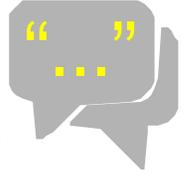
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1 Discover your Deepest
Passion by Sel f-Refl ection

You've got to find what you love. And that is as true for your work as it is for your lovers. Your work is going to fill a large part of your life, and the only way to be truly satisfied is to do what you believe is great work. And the only way to do haven't found it yet, keep looking. Don't when you find it. And, like any great on. So keep looking until you find it. Don't



great work is to love what you do. If you settle. As with all matters of the heart, you'll know relationship, it just gets better and better as the years roll settle.

- Steve Jobs, CEO, Apple Computer

It is my belief that true and deep passion can be unveiled and discovered by self-reflection with the help of chanting or meditation. One can also employ many spiritual and non-spiritual tools to discover passions but its meditation that makes the process of discovery much faster. If you feel more comfortable with self reflection or plain contemplation or sitting silently surrounded by nature rather than meditation, it is very much fine.

The point however is to be able to reach that passion through ways that best connects with your inner self.

Chanting is a type of meditation and helps in silencing the mind. Once the chatter of conscious mind is gone, its then only that our subconscious mind can help us with its intuitive capabilities. It provides us the wisdom, intuition and clarity of thinking to find out what we truly want. Some people are even blessed, with clarity about one's life mission coming in a flash during chanting/meditation session.



“Doubts bring about clouds of cowardice. It also invites the wind of fear. However, bright passion, like the burning, rising sun, can dispel fog and shed light upon darkness.”

Dr Daisaku Ikeda

We have many passions in life or many hobbies we feel passionate about, but it takes time to discover our true passion. I feel passionate about travelling and meeting new people, playing chess, teaching, training, coaching, brand management, spirituality, life skills and inspiring people. I could not have however pursued all my passions to make a living. I need to be focused to discover my deepest passion.

After chanting for half an hour every day for six months, I felt a clarity that my true passion lay in writing. I discovered that writing on spirituality- inspired life skills made me lose myself in the work. I keep my mobile on silent mode, and put in a hundred per cent of my emotions in keying the words and even felt as if I was a channel for the divine message. Sometimes, I enjoy reading my own writings and am even pleasantly surprised at all that I have written.

I have discovered my true passion.

Chanting is a powerful tool for a lay person as it is much easier to do than complex meditation techniques. Ideally one should use shorter Mantras (e.g. Nam Myoho Renge Kyo , Om Namoh Shivaya, Praise the Lord/Prophet, etc.) as it helps in concentration (especially for beginners).

Here are 11 simple steps to discover your true passion. Now take 11 plain paper sheets and write your answers on separate sheet for each step.



11 Simple Steps to Discover Your True Passion



1. Make a list of all the hobbies and activities you feel passionate about or you enjoy doing. Write all the activities without evaluation.
2. Shortlist these activities and hone in on the 3-5 activities which really immerse you.
3. Take a personality/career test, if possible. A popular test is Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test.
4. Ask yourself these questions.
 - ⊙ Have you won any awards, contests, competitions, etc., in any of the short-listed activities?
 - ⊙ Do you love to read and find out more and more about a particular subject? What makes you curious?
 - ⊙ Is there something which encourages your creative aspect and makes you constantly come up with new ideas?
 - ⊙ Who are your role models? What do they do?

- ⊙ Is there something which makes you gather all the energy and brings a smile on your face?
What comes naturally to you or makes you feel in the flow?
 - ⊙ Is there something which you would do for free? (If you are ready to do it without being paid, it means you truly enjoy it.)
 - ⊙ Is there something which makes you forget about success and failure? If you do an activity without bothering about success, your 100 % energy will go into work (and not the thought about striking rich).
 - ⊙ What activities attract you when you have spare time? What makes you emotional and makes you lose control when you are talking to friends?
5. Do your SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threats) Analysis. Ask people for your strengths and take suggestions from them. Match the strengths which you have (in your opinion) with the strengths suggested by close friends and family members. Shortlist which are common to both.
 6. Match the shortlisted activities with shortlisted strengths. Which are the activities where you can apply your core strengths?



7. Use hit and trial if required. Experiment with the shortlisted passions by working in each area if possible for few days/weeks. Many of our passions are temporary and disappear once we actually start doing the activity in a few days or weeks. Spend at least few months in the activity to cross check whether it is your true passion.
8. Talk to people working in the area of your passion and find out about educational qualifications/certifications required, challenges, monetary benefits and special skills required to succeed in the area.
9. Remember with the entire world at our disposal due to Internet, even the most crazy sounding hobbies and passions can be converted into full time careers.
10. Once you have discovered your true passion, just remember that practice makes a man perfect (and a woman too). Keep practicing to convert yourself from an amateur to a professional.
11. Remember the magic formula PPP or Triple P viz. Passion, Persistence and Patience. Be sure to enjoy the journey and don't focus too much on reaching the destination. Be persistent and have patience, results will surely come and I promise you they will be astounding.



When you have found your true passion, you will feel amazing excitement and feel as if you are bursting with energy. You will get fully immersed in work, lose track of the world and time and the output which will come through such work shall be world class or outstanding. (Remember it takes time to discover one's true passion but spiritual tools like meditation/chanting can help you discover it faster.)



A Life with Mission

- Dr Daisaku Ikeda says, “Those who wake up each morning with work to accomplish and a mission to fulfill are the happiest people of all. Please exert yourselves vigorously with the determination to live each day to the fullest so that you may compose a golden diary of life.”

A student of mine wrote something similar on Facebook, so enlightening. “For living a life of worthiness, one doesn't need to know what the world needs. . . One needs to know what is that one thing which makes YOU come alive and you just got to do it. You will find the answer to what world needs i.e. it needs people who have come alive.”

Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success. If you love what you are doing you will be successful.

Albert Schweitzer

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2 The Power of Faith in A Higher Power



Sorrow looks back, Worry looks around and Faith looks up.

Anonymous

For atheists and people who doubt the existence of a God/Higher Power, I would only say one thing, 'Faith Brings Peace'. Even if there is no God, and trusting in him brings peace, what is the harm in doing that? After all there are so many things, for which science has no explanation, give existence of God, a benefit of doubt.

God has given us the capacity to exercise faith so that we may find peace, joy and purpose in life. Exercise faith in the love that God holds for us, have faith in His/Her plans to make us happy and do have faith in His/Her willingness and power to guide us under any circumstances. What you will achieve in return is a relaxed mindset which undoubtedly helps you reach your goals in a better manner.

Faith has enormous power, much much more than we have ever imagined.

Dr Daisaku Ikeda, a Buddhist Teacher says, *“Faith is light. The hearts of those with strong faith are filled with light. A radiance envelops their lives. People with unshakeable conviction in faith enjoy a happiness that is as luminous as a full moon on a dark night, as dazzling as the sun on a clear day.”*





Faith comes naturally to some people while developing faith is a difficult process for some. It's actually a vicious circle - unless we see miracles ourselves, we do not develop complete faith and unless we develop complete faith, we cannot experience miracles. Dr Ikeda says about the power of prayer, “When we plant the seed of happiness that is faith and carefully tend its growth, it will produce fruit without fail. We have to bear in mind however that we cannot plant a seed today and expect it to bear fruit tomorrow. If we persevere, then our prayers will definitely be answered.”

Faith is like having a positive attitude towards God. A 'great attitude' of course seems to magically connect us to all sorts of coincidences and opportunities that were somehow invisible before the change.

“Please never turn your back on your faith. Courage is crucial. There is no room for faintheartedness in faith. The timid doom themselves to ridicule—from their partners, from their children, from their friends, from the world at large.”



Dr Daisaku Ikeda

We must understand that devil is also a creation of God. Without the devil and the obstacles, we cannot probably grow in life and our souls will never mature. Few years back, I blamed everybody for my failures viz family, circumstances and God. But spirituality gives you a different perspective. It tells you to stop the blame game and take the responsibility.

When once I wrote a blog on “My love hate relationship with women”, a spiritual lady commented, “You have invited those women in life.” Then I realized I have to take responsibility for everything (it's my Karma and the vibrations sent by me which invited certain negative experiences and women in my life) and my relationship with womankind changed forever.

In fact I have realized that spirituality holds a gratifying explanation for every human question possible and provides you with a solution for every human problem. Spirituality also says that God is within us and if we doubt ourselves, we actually doubt God. Wow, what a relief, “If I am divine with the powers of God, life should be so easy, the only thing I need to do is to connect with the God and tap the powers.”



At times, God will test our faith and send devilish forces to harass us. If we doubt God and our faith in him for few moments (which happens with most of the people) but switch to better sense immediately, we shall still win. We need to persevere in our faith. Dr Ikeda also says, “Faith is perseverance. The key to victory in any struggle in life is persistence. Faith should flow ceaselessly like water rather than flaring up briefly like fire.”

I remember reading a wonderful story on faith in a book, long back. A religious group had built a church on the foothills. Just ten days before the new church was supposed to be inaugurated, the local building inspector informed the church authorities that the parking was inadequate for the building. Until the church doubled the parking lot, they would not be able to use the new premises.

Unfortunately, the church had used every inch of land available except the mountain against which it had been built. The only option available was to move the mountain somewhere somehow.



Undaunted, the church pastor announced next Sunday morning, that he would meet all the members with 'mountain moving faith' in the evening. A prayer session would be held asking God to move the mountain and somehow provide enough money to have it paved before the scheduled opening.

More than twenty members gathered and prayed for three hours. Finally the pastor assured everyone, "God has never let us down before and I believe he will be faithful this time too."

Next morning there was a loud knock at the pastor's house. When the pastor said, 'come in' a construction foreman appeared and introduced himself, "We are building a shopping mall and we need some fill material. So will you be ready to sell part of the mountain to us." He further said, "We will pay you for the mud removed and also pave the way exposed free of charge." Such are the wonders of faith.



Life is a game of cards. The cards we get are not our choice, but how we play with those cards is completely our take. In fact if we get deep into spirituality, it is believed we write our own destinies with our thoughts, words and deeds. So we cannot blame God for even the cards we got, it's based on our current and past karma. The logical mind will argue about the evidence to support past birth and karma. But I assure you; a logical mind will never let you experience perfect peace.

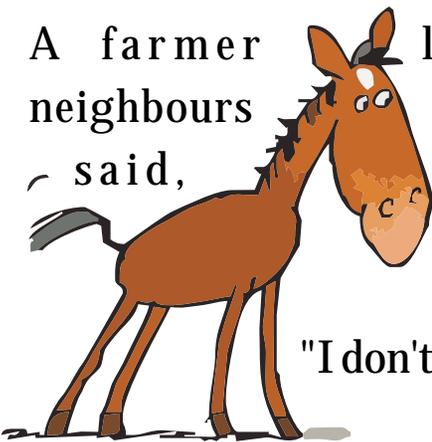
Surrender to God and keep an Open Mind

So many times it happens that we curse God for some events or suffering and after some time realize the learning and benefit from that event. If we completely surrender to God and accept everything, we find complete peace. In a state of complete peace and calmness, we tend to take wiser decisions. Many times we fail to understand the logic behind certain events but it is the fault of human beings and not God's. I remember a famous poem

“
*As a rule, man is a fool
When it is hot, he wants it cool
When it is cool, he wants it hot
Always wanting what is not*
”

We need a complete surrender to God and remind ourselves that he knows our best interests and what suffering is required for our growth and ultimately the growth of our soul. Let me share an interesting story.

A farmer lived with his son and one morning their only horse escaped from the farm. The neighbours came over and said, "How terrible! All our sympathies are with you." The farmer said, "I don't know if it's good, I don't know if it's bad. How do you know if it's good or bad?" One week later the horse returned with nine wild horses. The neighbors came by and said, "This is fantastic! You are so damned lucky!" The farmer said, "I don't know if it's good, I don't know if it's bad. How do you know if it's good or bad?"

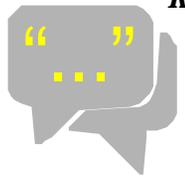


Three days later a horse kicked his son and broke his leg. The neighbors came by and said, "This is terrible news! It is really unfortunate!" The farmer said, "I don't know if it's good, I don't know if it's bad. How do you know if it's good or bad?"

One week later a war began and the military called for compulsory service by all healthy young men. The son couldn't go. The neighbors came by and said, "This is wonderful! Your son is safe and need not go for the war! The farmer said, "I don't know if it's good, I don't know if it's bad. How do you know if it's good or bad?" So stop worrying about what is good and what is bad.

Attitude towards Suffering

"The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss, and have found their way out of depths. These people have an appreciation, sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen."



Elizabeth Kubler

Each joy is a moment of bliss and each suffering is a learning experience - with this attitude life seems so beautiful. Dr Daisaku Ikeda says, "No matter where we go, we cannot escape from the sufferings that are part and parcel of life. If we cannot avoid these sufferings, then our only choice is to overcome them. And since we have no choice but to overcome them, then we might as well live joyfully and vigorously while doing so."

There are few questions that persists - Is there a panacea to change our bad moods into cheerful moods? How do we covert our fearful unhappy and negative states of mind quickly into a positive state? In my opinion, the quickest way to overcome such states is to start chanting any mantra with faith. It shifts your focus, silences your mind and gives a hope that God will come to your rescue (or there is some meaning in the suffering).



Another successful technique which I use is to connect with positive people, chat with them on phone /internet or if possible, visit a positive person. So the simple trick is to trust God and He/She will not betray your trust.



“Life is not always smooth. If it were, we would never grow and develop as human beings. If we succeed, we are envied; if we fail, we are ridiculed and attacked. Sadly this is how people are.”

Dr Daisaku Ikeda

“God CAN DO is belief; God WILL DO is faith.”





3 Gather Courage through
Positive Affirmations



“Then there is a still higher type of courage - the courage to brave pain, to live with it, to never let others know of it and to still find joy in life; to wake up in the morning with an enthusiasm for the day ahead.”

Howard Cosell

Now let us gather some courage, an essential ingredient to realize our dreams, through positive affirmations. The inner critic inside us sends us so many discouraging and negative messages, which needs to be countered with positive affirmations.

First, let us be very clear about affirmations. In simple words, affirmation is a declaration that something is true. Every thought we think and every word we say is an affirmation. The entire inner dialogue (generally critical) is a stream of affirmations.

Positive affirmations are usually short positive statements which challenge our inner critic or negative beliefs and replace them with positive self-nurturing beliefs.

They also force us to focus on our goals and remind us to become conscious about our thoughts and words. They program the subconscious mind to attract success and improve our life.

As we grow up, our mind is programmed by parents, friends, teachers and society. In the process their negative experiences, prejudices and false beliefs may also get programmed in us. Affirmations help us release the negative programming done to our mind.



As soon as you get up in the morning, say these 10 positive affirmations loudly in your room.

1. There is divine in me and if I have divine, right inside me, nothing should be impossible.
2. I have the right and the potential to discover a life of perfect joy and inner peace.
3. I will discover my passions and dedicate my life to realization of my true passions.
4. I have a life partner or rather a mission partner who will walk along with me or at least support me in my life's mission. (If you don't have, you can change it to, 'I will find')
5. I have the wisdom and capacity to find work-family balance and though it is challenging at times, it is not impossible.
6. Today is the luckiest day of my life and I will bring out the best in myself and others today.
7. I take care of my physical and mental health and respect my body, mind and soul.
8. I find few minutes to connect with myself and chant/meditate/contemplate to get peace. I deserve it.
9. I act with compassion, wisdom and generosity with people and bring out their divinity.
10. I am emotionally strong to give love and yet not behave like a doormat.

Directions for using affirmations

- ③ Be charged with confidence and belief.
- ③ Repeat your affirmations many times a day, whenever you are free.
- ③ You can repeat the affirmation personally relevant to you as many times as you wish and whenever you feel comfortable.
- ③ Write the affirmations on a piece of paper and keep it in your wallet/purse.
- ③ Concentrate completely without any distractions though you can use related visuals if you wish.
- ③ Support your affirmations with necessary actions (or rather your actions with the affirmations)
- ③ If you find affirmations useful, you can buy affirmation cards also from the market or internet.



To understand the benefit of affirmations, it will be useful to understand the power of the mind and the necessity to control our thoughts.



Power of the Mind



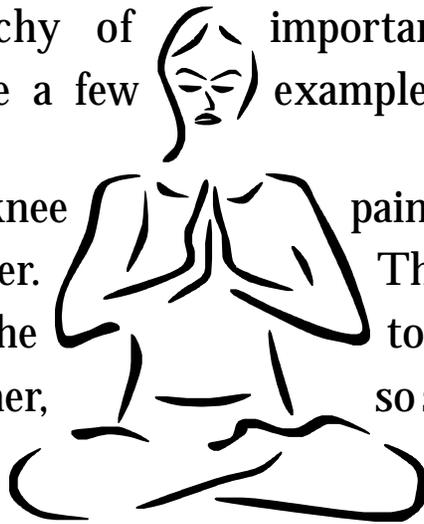
*Your worst enemy cannot harm you
As much as your own thoughts, unguarded.
But once mastered,
No one can help you as much,
Not even your father or your mother*



Buddha

Have you ever wondered, “Why did God place the brain on top of the body, then heart and then stomach?” It denotes the hierarchy of importance. The mind is so powerful that it controls all the body parts. Here are a few examples to understand the power of the mind.

Once a lady who was having severe knee pain had been seriously harmed by her sister. She remove the grudges from her mind. She he would not have been able to forgive her,



pain went to a sage and complained how she The sage asked her to forgive the sister and told the sage that if he were in her position, so serious was the harm and hurt caused.

The sage had to make a lot of effort to convince her that by keeping grudges and not forgiving her sister, she was harming herself rather than the sister. Finally she was able to forgive her sister and as soon as she forgave, the knee pain she had started disappearing. Louise Hay rightly says, “I do not fix problems. I fix my thinking. Then problems fix themselves.”



A life skills camp was going on in our college where students were encouraged to release their blocked emotions, share their feelings openly and let go of their grudges and guilt. A female student shared her experience of how her family desperately wanted a son but she (a daughter) was born. She grew up hearing stories of her family's desire for a son and she started behaving like their son to fulfill their longing and make them happy. This went on for years and because of the constant desire to behave like a male, she developed male hormones and her doctor advised surgical removal of male hormones. It was shocking for her class fellows to hear the revelation, but one could see that she felt unburdened.

Happiness and sorrow both are controlled by this powerful force called mind. If you can master your mind, the world will fall at your feet. But it is more difficult than we imagine. Dr Daisaku Ikeda says, “For one who has conquered the mind, mind is the best of friends, but for one who has failed to do so, their very mind is the greatest enemy.” So once we have discovered real peace of mind, then many other discoveries will begin.

Florence Shin says, “Life is a game of boomerangs. Our thoughts, deeds and words return to us sooner or later with astounding accuracy.” Meditation, prayer and positive thinking are a great combination for making your mind your best friend and to ensure that only good things boomerang into your life.

Suffering is caused by involuntary thoughts. Everything of benefit is created by conscious thoughts. If the majority of our thoughts are involuntary, our life will be filled with strife. If the majority of our thoughts are conscious, our life will be a channel of blessings. When all is conscious, all is a blessing.



Nithya Shanti



4 Let's Stop the Blame Game
and Take Responsibility

*It's me who is my enemy
Me who beats me up
Me who makes the monsters
Me who strips my confidence.*

Paula Cole

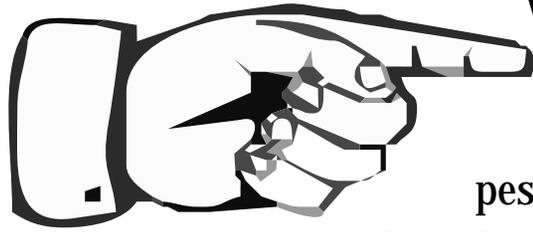
In the morning we get up and blame the government for the poor infrastructure. In afternoon, we blame the boss for everything that went wrong. By evening we are blaming God and circumstances for all the suffering we had today. And finally we say goodnight putting rest of the blame on our parents for all that they did not give and teach.



If we want to really win the game called life, we need to stop the blame game and look within.

In fact, the best years of our life are the ones in which we decide our problems are our own. We realize that we control our own destiny. According to spirituality there is nothing such as pre-destined and we very much write our own destiny through our words, actions and thoughts and they together become our Karma.

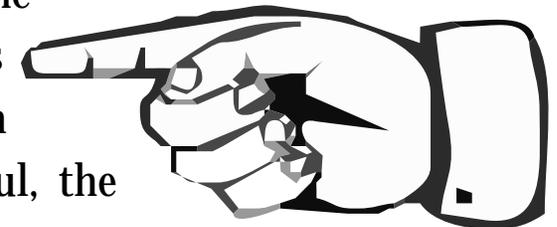
The day we start taking responsibility, things start changing. Ken Keyes Jr says, "You are not responsible for the programming you picked up in childhood. However, as an adult, you are one hundred percent responsible for fixing it." As grownups, we need to be courageous to say "I lost it" rather than saying "It got lost."



When a man points a finger at someone else, he should remember that four of his fingers are pointing at himself. So why point fingers at our own selves, why not simply accept the responsibility? Dr. Miller says “We are pessimistic because life seems like a very bad, very screwed-up film. If you ask “What the hell is wrong with the projector?” and go up to the control room, you find it's empty. You are the projectionist, and you should have been up there all the time.”

The question arises, why do we blame somebody else? Sometimes the other person is responsible for what might have gone wrong, and sometimes, we find the other person an easy target to release our frustration. The blame game makes things easy in the short term as we always have an excuse for things gone wrong, tasks not finished and so on. But in the long term, the habit of playing the blame game can destroy your personality, career, reputation and relationships. On the other hand, if we act as mature adults and take responsibility for what has gone wrong, we may fix up things faster and emerge winners in the game called life.

The willingness to accept responsibility for one's own life is the source from which self-respect springs. If one is always playing the blame game it can mean two things; firstly, one has not grown up and secondly, one has low self-esteem and one wants to hide this bitter truth (so one plays the game of offense which is the best defense). But we cannot fool all the people all the time and soon we will develop a reputation of a person who looks for excuses rather than take responsibility for things. James Allen says, “A man sooner or later discovers that he is the master-gardener of his soul, the director of his life.”



Up to a point, our life is shaped by environment and heredity. Then there comes a time when we have to become strong enough to accept responsibility. Only the weak blame parents, their bad times or lack of good fortune. In fact, we have the divine power to create our own luck.



You have brains in your head.

You have feet in your shoes.

You can steer yourself in any direction you choose.

You're on your own.

And you know what you know.

You are the guy who'll decide where to go.

Dr. Seuss



Once I wrote on Facebook, “She told him, “I can see the future and this is your destiny.” He said, “I refuse to accept my destiny. I will change it.” So firm was his resolve that God decided to bow down to his will and rewrote his destiny again.” As spiritual beings having a human experience, we have to become the masters of our fate and captains of our souls.

So the five key points to remember are:-

1. I take charge of my life and my future is in my hands.
2. I can write my own destiny by taking control of my thoughts, words and actions.
3. I am a mature adult and I do not believe in blame games.

4. I am emotionally strong and a person of self-respect, hence I take the responsibility on my shoulders.
5. I will try my best to fix up things which have gone wrong in the past and the divine in me has the power to do so.

If we wish to emerge as true leaders at home and the workplace, we need to learn to take all the debit and pass the credit to others. Earlier I used to ask people, “How is life treating you?” Now I ask, “How are you treating life?” Remember, ducks quack about problems, eagles soar above problems. So what have you done today, “Quack, quack or Soar, soar?”

*Responsibility: A detachable burden easily shifted to the shoulders of God, Fate, Fortune, Luck or one's neighbor.
In the days of astrology it was customary
to unload it upon a star.*

Ambrose Bierce, The Devil's Dictionary



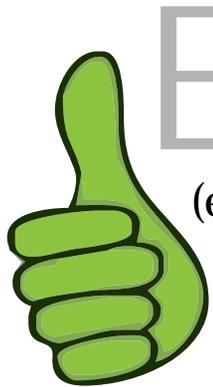


5 Shed the Negative Emotions and Embrace Gratitude



All of our emotions are our babies. Treat them tenderly, care for them. Be with them. Understanding and compassion will ultimately transform them.

Thich Nhat Hanh



Emotion is the complete psychophysiological experience of an individual's state of mind as interacting with biochemical (internal) and environmental (external) influences. Emotion involves physiological (bodily) arousal, expressive behavior and conscious experience.



Some emotions occur for a few seconds like surprise and some emotions last for years like love. Emotions are primarily of two types viz. negative and positive.

Positive emotions - examples include happiness, excitement, love and so on...

Negative emotions - examples include sadness, anger, fear and so on...

Though as human beings we are bound to be overpowered by emotions at times, but one must remember that emotions often tend to be against logic and need to be kept under check. We can make a fool of ourselves with too much emotion.

“

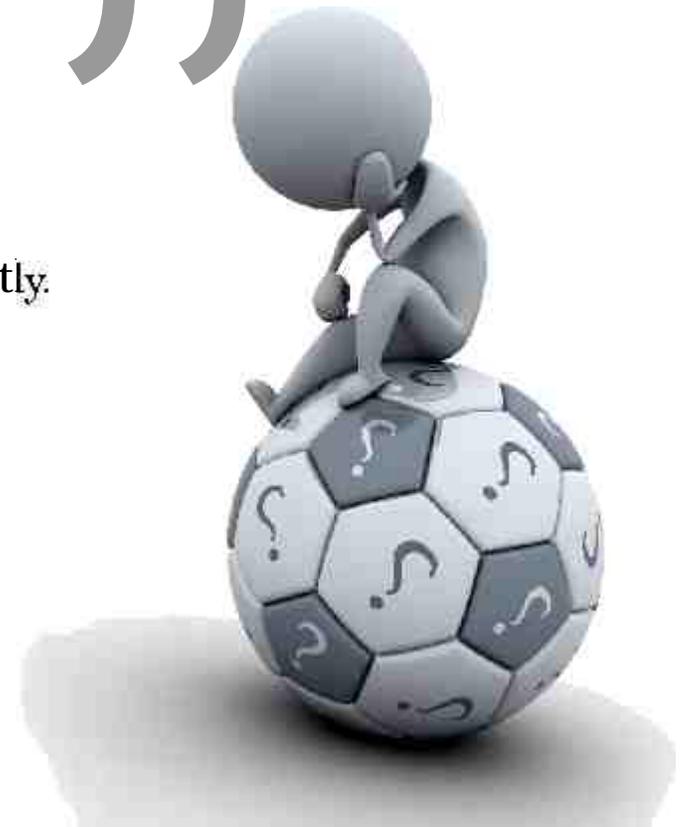
*“There may be times when life seems gloomy and dull.
When we feel stuck in some situation or other, when we are negative
toward everything, when we feel lost and bewildered, not sure
which way to turn – at such times we must transform
our passive mind-set and determine,
“I will proceed along this path,” “I will pursue my mission today.”
When we do so a genuine springtime arrives in our
hearts, and flowers start to blossom.*”

Dr Daisaku Ikeda

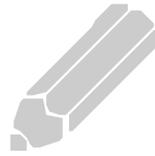
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Expressing Negative Emotions

1. Don't wait till things build up and release them more frequently.
2. Do not dramatize or exaggerate.
3. Talk about how you feel.
4. Do not let it stay for a long time. Let go.
5. Apologize if required or find a way to save face.



How to Manage Negative Emotions in Self



One needs to follow the steps below:

1. Understand the type and intensity of emotion.
2. Feel it consciously, accept it and develop a desire to reduce it.
3. Analyze what triggers them. Go within and check whether you have done something wrong to invite the experience.
4. Understand they are slow poisons and leak of energy.
5. Use positive affirmations to counter constant negative emotion such as insecurity. Focus on your achievements.
6. Let go or release the negative emotion by being a witness to the experience.
7. Focus Recall on what you have received from God/universe till now and develop a sense of gratitude.

Examples of Positive Affirmations

- ③ The amount of God's grace in my life is huge and hence I am filled with gratitude.
- ③ Joy, Peace, Love and Faith flow through me and I can feel 'the connect' with the divine.
- ③ Anger, Jealousy, Pride and Insecurity flow through me and I observe them as a witness.

How to Manage Negative Emotions in others

1. Realize that you are a free spirit and you decide what to do.
2. Encourage the other person to analyze the root cause of the emotion.
3. Remember we judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their actions. Give others a benefit of doubt, they may have good intentions behind bad actions.
4. In case of a proud person gently but firmly point out his weaknesses and failures.



“Show me anger and I will show you hurt, show me hurt and I will show you love”

Rumi

Using Spiritual Tools

1. Meditation carried out at a natural wonder spot like sea beaches makes us feel the insignificance of ourselves and our problems. We in fact shift our focus to the grandness and majesty of the universe. As they say, “The best things in the universe come free.”
2. Swami Sivananda has suggested the Raja Yoga technique of emotion and thought control, “Cultivate positive virtuous thoughts of mercy, love, purity, forgiveness, integrity, generosity, humility, etc., in the garden of your mind. The negative vicious thoughts of hatred, lust, anger, greed, pride, etc., will die by themselves. It is difficult to destroy the evil thoughts by attacking them directly. You will have to tax your will and waste your energy.”
3. Gratitude is the strongest (and overpowering) positive emotion. Feel grateful to divine for helping your soul grow through suffering and thank him for all the moments of joy. Remember each joy is a moment of bliss and each suffering is a learning experience.

Shedding the Emotional Baggage



“Drop everything you're clinging to & keep walking. What remains is what's meant to stay what goes is what was in your way.”

Dee Foster



We all are travelers in the journey called LIFE. Throughout this journey, we tend to carry our past experiences as an emotional baggage throughout our life. One principle of enjoying travel is to 'Travel light'. This applies also and likewise to enjoy the journey of life also, where one needs to shed our all emotional baggage and in order to travel light and happy.

Emotional baggage consists of our past experiences which builds preconceived notions about relationships and people. These notions and unconsciously destroy or disturb our future experiences. Almost all of us drag along some baggage from our past into our present lives that stop us from winning in our present current life situations. We hold on to pain, anger, and resentment, and find it difficult to let go unless life uses shock therapy. When we carry emotional baggage of the past, we forget that we are reacting on the past experience instead of reacting to what is happening now. We forget that we are in a different situation and dealing with a different set of people.

Playing life with emotional baggage is like playing a basketball game with three-pound steel shoes. Now try in the weightless Nikes in the next half of your life's game., try weightless Nikes. How great it feels to unload one's "emotional baggage" through the power of forgiveness and willingness to forgetting of the negative experiences.

The Bible says, "Purge the old leaven that you may be fresh dough, still uncontaminated for Christ." How do we jettison some of our emotional baggage and increase the joy of life's journey? Only if the realization dawns on you that the baggage is preventing you from becoming all that you can be, you will start taking necessary action.





Get inside your own head to understand why do you feel and behave the way you do? Identify the "emotional baggage" (what exactly do you carry) and start viewing life based on current information instead of being held captive by your past. However, since emotional processes can work faster than the mind, it takes a power stronger than the mind to override emotional circuitry. It takes the power of the heart.

Lucy MacDonald says, "Carrying your negative emotional baggage requires energy that could be put to much better use - say goodbye to it, let it go, and get on with your life."

Dr. Bradley Nelson, holistic physician and expert on handling 'Trapped Emotions and the Heart-Wall' has come up with an interesting theory. He says, emotions like "heartache" and "heartbreak", describe the physical sensations that occur in the heart during strong emotional situations. In fact emotions such as "anger", "grief" and "fear," often become the Trapped Emotions in the body's energy field. When they gather around the heart, they form a Heart-Wall, a barrier created by the subconscious mind.

The wall is made up of negative emotions or energy and anyone with a Heart-Wall can't give or receive love fully. Someone could be sending out pure love to you, but that love has to somehow get past the barriers of "sadness" and "anger" that envelops your heart. A Heart-Wall can be helpful in the short-term as it can protect you from unbearable emotional pain. But until you get rid of it, you'll be less able to reach out and connect, even with the ones you love the most. If your city is being bombed, it's a good idea to hide out in a bunker until it's all over, but you don't need to hide forever.

Breaking the Heart-Wall or not, will decide whether you will live a life of disappointment or live happily ever after. So my dear friend, - Dump; Throw out; Get rid of the baggage that's dragging you down. Make peace with your past and stop being an emotional pack rat, holding on to stuff and dragging it along where ever you go.

And meet everyone fresh and anew!

"Everyone's got emotional baggage; the question is, what are you doing to unpack that trunk and put it away, so your lovers, friends and relatives don't have to keep tripping over it?"

Shari Schreiber

Handling Fear-The Biggest Block to Success

Fear is behind most of our negative emotions. Hence correct handling of fear becomes all the more important.

"If you can live through that (a difficult situation) you can live through anything. You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.'"

Eleanor Roosevelt



Cheerfulness

Cheerfulness is a strong positive emotion to overpower negative emotions. Mother Teresa used to say that smile is a symbol of peace.

“And so of cheerfulness or a good temper, the more it is spent, the more of it remains.... Power dwells with cheerfulness, hope puts us in a working mood.”

Emerson



Inviting Gratitude

“I have noticed that the Universe loves gratitude. The more grateful you are, the more goodies you get. When I say 'goodies,' I don't mean only material things. I mean all the people, places, and experiences that make life so wonderfully worth living.”

Louise L. Hay

Human beings often tend to be ungrateful. We find it very easy to find faults, how our parents could have done a better job, how God could have given us better opportunities and circumstances, how the boss could have been nicer, how our siblings could have had less rivalry and so on. How often do we thank people around us for the small and big favors they have done, for the love and kindness they have shown, the sweet memories which they left with us and so on.



Benjamin Franklin says, "Most people return small favors, acknowledge medium ones and repay greater ones -- with ingratitude." How many times do we thank God, our parents, our teachers, our friends or whoever has done something for us. It is sad but we invite unhappiness and suffering in our life by not being grateful. Showing gratitude and appreciation is the best way of aligning ourselves with the universe, to invite miracles in our life. My mentor says, "We must never forget to repay our debt of gratitude we owe our parents, teacher and country."

Ralph Marston says, "Express your appreciation, sincerely and without the expectation of anything in return. Truly appreciate those around you, and you'll soon find many others around you.

Truly appreciate life, and you'll find that you have more of it." If you are grateful, the universe will give you more and more. But if you are grateful only to get more, the universe will judge, it's not gratitude but greed. Samuel Johnson rightly says, "Gratitude is a fruit of great cultivation; you do not find it among gross people." Only civilized people have gratitude, not the animalistic beings. People whose hearts are full of gratitude and appreciation are truly beautiful.

Dr Daisaku Ikeda says, "As human beings we clearly remember what we have done for others, but we tend to forget easily what others have done for us. When you try to become the kind of person who never forgets the favors extended to you by others you will deepen and expand your capacity as a human being."

Never underestimate the fuel you give the human spirit when you take time to give the gift of acknowledgment. As Nithya Shanti suggests, take a vow today, “I choose to make this a 100% complaint free day. I choose to fill this day with appreciation and gratitude. And that is why this is the happiest day of my life. And so it is.”

In a workshop conducted by Landmark, the well known life skills company from US, the participants were told, “Your parents were only supposed to procreate and anything else they have done is a bonus.”

“The grateful mind is constantly fixed upon the best; therefore, it tends to become the best.”

Wallace D Wattles

Webliography

[✍ http://ht.ly/375dV](http://ht.ly/375dV)



6 Silence your Mind to
Gain True Wisdom



When was the last time you felt your soul “being expressed? When was the last time you cried with joy? Wrote poetry? Made music? When was the last time you sat alone with the silence, traveling to the deepest part of your being?”

Neale Donald Walsch

If only we had the wisdom to take the right action, half our problems we have, would not have been created in the first place and the rest we would have been able to resolve rather than aggravate.

The question is then how can we develop wisdom? According to Confucius, we can develop wisdom through reflection (which is the noblest and hence the best), by imitation (which is easiest) and by experience (which is most difficult and makes us bitter).

We have to constantly take decisions and sometimes even sudden ones, as in emergencies. Often, after taking a decision, we have self doubt (called cognitive dissonance in management). How do we take wise decisions which minimize the self doubt, which are quick, yet right and appropriate to the situation? How do we reflect (as Confucius says) and take the noblest decisions which we will not regret and rather feel proud of?

The spiritual tools which we can use to tap inner wisdom include meditation, chanting, positive affirmations, deep introspection and so on. Spiritual tools.net defines spiritual tools as, “A non-material, situation specific action to change attitude or awareness proven over time and across cultures to promote quality of life.”





Our thoughts bring people, things, situations and circumstances into our lives and to attract the right people and situations, it is important to master the thoughts. James Allen says, “You are today where your thoughts have brought you; you will be tomorrow where your thoughts take you.” Meditation helps us in mastering thought/mind and in controlling negative thoughts (and inviting positive thoughts). All this results in more wisdom.

To tap inner wisdom also requires one to have perfect inner peace. And to have that, you have to let go of guilt, grudges, emotional baggage and all other negative emotions. The focus should be on improving oneself which will result in increasing wisdom through higher levels of consciousness. Leo Tolstoy once said, “Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”

As somebody has rightly said, at the beginning of wisdom, one starts questioning everything and at the peak of wisdom one starts accepting everything. There is no scientific evidence to prove the Law of Karma but it can provide perfect peace to a person, essential for tapping wisdom. The Law of Karma may help us feel that whatever wrong happened in the past had a justification and whatever will happen in the future, will also be based on a justification. Rainer Rilke says, “Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart & try to love the questions themselves.” The answers will surely come in a matter of time.

I once wrote on Facebook:-

“*Knowledge is easy to gain, Wisdom is difficult
Teacher is easy to get, Guru is difficult
Learning is easy to do, Unlearning is difficult
Existence is easier, Living is difficult*”

Meditation and spiritual tools provide us with wisdom to respond (and not react). Deepak Shinde in his article, “Choose Your Response”, highlights the importance of contemplation in discerning between response and reaction and says, “Reactions are instinctive while responses are intellectual. Between the stimuli (what happens to me) and the response (what happens through me), if there is no gap, it creates reaction. But between the stimuli and response if I use the gap to think and contemplate, then I can respond thoughtfully. An intelligent person responds, a fool reacts.”

Meditation & mastering of emotions develop the wisdom to have a positive attitude under extreme circumstances. Modern life can be extremely stressful at times and is creating clouded thinking with higher levels of stress and lower levels of emotional support in relationships. Meditation helps in developing the clear-headedness to understand the subtle differences between:

- ⊙ Teaching a lesson and taking revenge.
- ⊙ Being angry for the wrong reasons and harboring 'righteous anger'.
- ⊙ Being sensitive and being oversensitive.
- ⊙ Living a genuinely happy life and gaining happiness by neglecting our duties.
- ⊙ Loving unconditionally and experiencing possessive love.
- ⊙ Finding a fine balance between asserting our rights and joyfully doing our duties.
- ⊙ Having Mindlessness (during meditation) and Mindfulness (in our day to day living) at different times.
- ⊙ Understand that each negative thought and emotion is a slow poison which will leave a permanent impact on our mind, body and soul.

Kabir, the mystic Indian poet, rightly says,



*“Those who took deep dive in the water, got the precious pearls (of Wisdom),
Poor me, was afraid of drowning, so kept sitting at the bank (of the river)”*



“Silence please! This is how I began my teaching career with immature undergraduate students. Now when I teach self mastery (and meditation) to mature (and middle aged at times) students, I am still saying Silence please.....only difference being the silence of the mind. Life has come a full circle.”

Dr Amit Nagpal



Great People on Mind and Silence

“To lead a life in which we are inspired and can inspire others, our hearts have to be alive; they have to be filled with passion and enthusiasm. To achieve that, we need the courage to live true to ourselves. And to live true to ourselves, we need the strength of mind not to be swayed by our environment or be obsessed with vanity and superficial appearances.”

Dr Daisaku Ikeda

“We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature - trees, flowers, grass- grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence.. We need silence to be able to touch souls.”

Mother Teresa



“Learn to get in touch with the silence within yourself and know that everything in life has a purpose. In the attitude of silence the soul finds the path in a clearer light and what is elusive and deceptive resolves itself into crystal clearness. Our life is a long and arduous quest after truth.”

Mahatma Gandhi

A Note on Chanting

Chanting is the simplest technique of silencing the mind. Ideally, the mantra should be as short as possible which makes it easier to concentrate during constant repetition. If one still faces a problem in concentration, one can do mental counting to stop the mind from wandering. Only when you have learnt to silence the mind, can you be successful in advanced meditation techniques. Chanting is a good enough form of meditation for a layperson but those seeking advanced spiritual experiences need to learn more advanced techniques.

Do not be irritated by the constant rush of thought and the lack of control over them in the initial period. As you practice, you will be able to silence the mind for longer and longer periods.

Blank Mind Exercise

With conscious effort, make your mind completely silent. Witness the random thoughts crossing your mind. Gently discourage the thoughts and encourage complete silence. As one practices one can move from a few seconds to a few minutes of silence though it may take weeks or months to get there. depending upon your practice. Do this exercise now and make a note of the approximate time, you were

to silence your mind. Chant half an hour for 3 months and do this exercise again. You will notice a significant increase in the period you are able to exercise silence.





7 How do I Attract
Positive Vibrations?

Law of Attraction and Spirituality



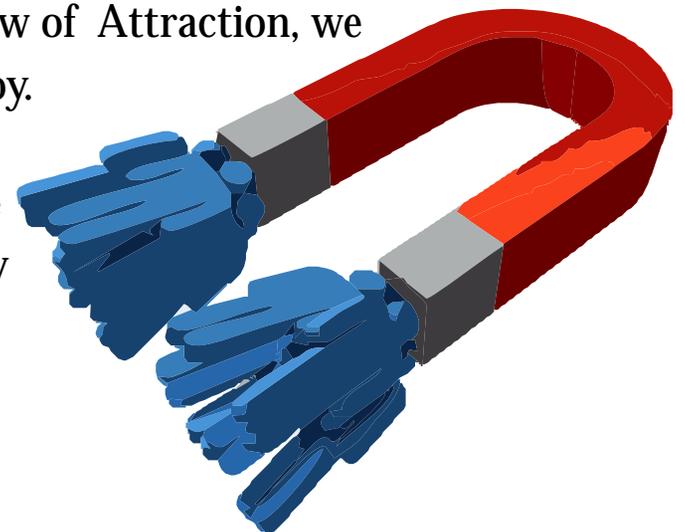
“Everything you want is out there, waiting for you to ask. Everything you want also wants you but you have to take action to get it. The universe wants you to succeed.”

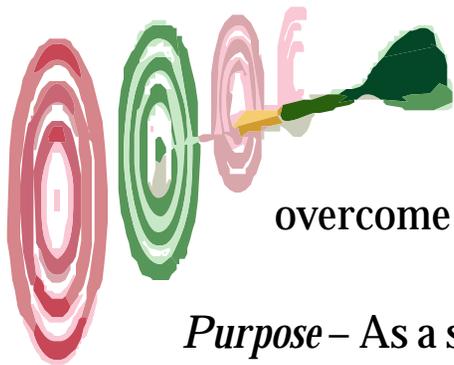
Jack Canfield

The law of Attraction simply states that we attract into our life whatever we focus on. Whatever objects or ideas, we give our energy and attention to, come back to us sooner or later. If we are focused on the good and the positive, we attract more of it and if our focus is on lack and negativity, we attract more negativity and shortages in our life.

Understanding the Law of Attraction is the key to creating the life of our dreams. It's a scientific principle, like the law of gravity. By properly applying its principles in our lives, it will help us pursue whatever we want. By consciously working with the Law of Attraction, we create exactly what we desire with minimum effort and maximum joy.

But merely understanding the law will not work - it has to be combined with action. Firstly, we need to determine what we really want out of life. The three key areas that need to be looked into are; clarity, purpose and action.





Clarity – To gain clarity, you need to understand your passions, your priorities in life and why you are here on this planet. Meditation can give you clarity of thinking and in case you have a clouded thinking problem, it can help you overcome it.

Purpose – As a second step, you need to draft a purpose statement with your dreams and goals.

We have seven key areas in our lives: personal, relationships, health and body, careers and education, recreation, financial, and contribution, which need to be looked into. The emotional strength for perseverance and the wisdom for taking right decisions will come through meditation and prayer.

Action – The third step is action. Meditation gives you the wisdom to take the right action as well as the intuition to choose the right options in life. This law says that you will attract into your life whatever you give your energy, attention and focus to. The hard work which you do now with positive energy, alertness (awareness and attention) and with complete focus & concentration will bring unexpected rewards and abundance sooner or later. Jack Canfield says, “The Law of Attraction allows for infinite possibilities, infinite abundance, and infinite joy. It knows no order of difficulty, and it can change your life in every way.”

Using Spiritual Tools

Immense positive energy and vibrations are required for the Law of Attraction to work which can only come through spiritual tools. Negative emotions like anger, guilt, resentment and so on, have to be released and positive emotions like gratitude have to fill our mind. Any kind of negative emotions will

get in the way of attaining your dreams. With negative thoughts, energy and emotions, you will not be able to focus on your goals and will end up with the belief that you can't do it.

It is difficult to remove negative emotions. One simple way to accomplish this is to fill yourself with positive emotions which force the negative emotions out. There is no space left for them to flourish within an atmosphere of appreciation, gratitude and joy.

 *Viewing events and situations in a positive light is important. The strength, wisdom and cheerfulness that accompany such an attitude lead to happiness. To regard everything in a positive light or with a spirit of goodwill, however, does not mean being foolishly gullible and allowing people to take advantage of our good nature. It means having the wisdom and perception to actually move things in a positive direction by seeing things in their best light, while all the time keeping our eyes firmly focused on reality.*

Dr Daisaku Ikeda

Visualization is a very effective tool to shift our mental pictures from negative to positive. It would be a good idea to maintain a book of visuals relating to your dreams and desires. Keep pasting the pictures that match your dreams; a beautiful home near the beach, a loving partner, affectionate children, a plush office; it can be anything that you desire.





A basic spiritual principle of taking responsibility for your actions and stopping the blame game will help you in releasing your grudges and resentment. The philosophy of “I change, Everything changes”, will turn your life around completely and start bringing positive people and circumstances into your life. We need to realize that to change things on an external level; we must first make necessary internal changes. Realise that we are not bound by a destiny and the role of luck is very limited as only we create our ‘destiny’ through our thoughts, emotions and actions.

Once you make these inner changes, you will start reconnecting with your inner truth and wisdom. You will start trusting your intuition, honoring your emotions and develop a heightened level of awareness.

By trusting in a supreme consciousness, god or a higher power, you will be able to let go and start developing real faith, gratitude and joy. Jack Canfield rightly says that in changing ourselves, the world changes. We are all here for a reason and the world needs what we have to offer.

Happy Attracting!!

A Note on Ho'oponopono

Ho-o-pono-pono is an ancient Hawaiian practice of reconciliation and forgiveness in which a short series



of phrases like “I’m sorry, Please forgive me, Thank you, I love you” are repeated like a Mantra. The purpose is to have a ready tool whenever you’re challenged by negativity and want to transform it.

Ho’oponopono” is defined in the Hawaiian Dictionary as “mental cleansing: family conferences in which relationships were set right through prayer, discussion, confession, repentance, and mutual restitution and forgiveness.”

The noun pono is defined as “goodness, uprightness, morality, moral qualities, correct or proper procedure, excellence, well-being, prosperity, welfare, benefit, true condition or nature, duty; moral, fitting, proper, righteous, right, upright, just, virtuous, fair, beneficial, successful, in perfect order, accurate, correct, eased, relieved; should,

ought, must, necessary.”

Ponopono is defined as “to put to rights; to put in order or shape, correct, revise, adjust, amend, regulate, arrange, rectify, tidy up, make orderly or neat.”

An interesting process is carried out to perform Ho’oponopono. It begins with prayer. A statement of the problem is made, and the transgression is discussed. Family members are expected to work problems through and cooperate, not “hold fast to the fault.”

Reflection is undertaken (with silence) on the entanglement of emotional injuries. Everyone's feelings are acknowledged and thereafter confession, repentance and forgiveness take place and thereby everyone releases each other (letting go). The event is then closed with a ceremonial feast, called 'pani', which includes eating kala seaweed, symbolic of the release.





8 Develop a Personal Brand BY Being a Person of WCC (Wisdom, Compassion and Courage)

Let's first understand what Personal Branding is. It is communicating your values, beliefs and personality authentically and displaying them in everything you do. As the Personal Branding Guru William Arruda says, "Effective personal branding involves more show than tell. When you demonstrate what makes you great every day, you build a reputation for it."

Many surveys show that the most important factor for professional success is networking with the right people. What kind of people do you like to network with? Most of us would say people who are successful but more importantly it's people who inspire trust.

So how do we inspire trust? We inspire trust by developing a good reputation and emanating positive vibrations. While we can clearly sense a negative aura around some people (who may be over smart or over critical), we are equally moved, if not more, by the positive aura around some others. I don't think anyone likes to be around people with a dark aura, except due to business compulsions or simply due to lack of choice.



If there are any tools for building a positive aura, they are the qualities of wisdom, compassion and courage and all three can be developed through chanting or meditation. Let's take a look at them one-by-one.

Wisdom

What after all is wisdom? How is it different from knowledge? One can gain knowledge but one does not necessarily gain wisdom. Knowledge puts us in the way of wisdom but wisdom is something experiential. One cannot learn wisdom, one must assimilate it.

The poet Kahlil Gibran says, "Height and Depth are nearer to each other than the mid ground." Knowledge can be defined as the understanding of a subject with potential to be used for a specific purpose while wisdom can be described as the ability to make correct judgments and decisions. There was a nice joke on the networking site LinkedIn. It said that you should not ask your boss for advice, not because he will tell you the right decisions, but because he has taken more wrong decisions than you (due to his experience). Sandra Carey says, "Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living, the other helps you make a life." Japanese have a nice proverb differentiating knowledge and wisdom, "Knowledge without wisdom is a load of books, on the back of an ass."

Wikipedia has an interesting description of wisdom, "Wisdom is a deep understanding and realizing of people, things, events or situations, resulting in the ability to choose or act or inspire to consistently produce the optimum results with a minimum of time, energy or thought. It is the ability to optimally (effectively and efficiently) apply perceptions and knowledge and so produce the desired results. Wisdom is also the comprehension of what is true or right coupled with optimum judgment as to action. Wisdom often requires control of one's emotional reactions (the "passions") so that one's principles, reason and knowledge prevail to determine one's actions."



Compassion

"Compassion is that which makes the heart of the good move at the pain of others. It crushes and destroys the pain of others; thus, it is called compassion. It is called compassion because it shelters and embraces the distressed."

The Buddha

Compassion is a virtue in which the emotional capacities of empathy and sympathy are regarded as a part of love itself. According to the Latin roots of the word, compassion means co-suffering, suffering with others, feeling the pain of others as if it was your pain. As the saying goes, “Kindness gives to other, Compassion knows no other.”

Genuine compassion for others will make you a good listener and help you empathize. One must remember that empathy is deep connectivity and compassion must have passion. It will attract people towards you automatically and you will notice immediate results from the magnetic field around your personality. The bottomline is: Either give people your complete attention or just tell them, “I am busy right now and I do not believe in giving incomplete attention.” Sue P. Thoele points out, “Deep listening is miraculous for both listener and speaker. When someone receives us with open-hearted, non-judging, intensely interested listening, our spirits expand.”



Listening with empathy will create miracles and; help you connect with people so fast, you will be totally surprised. Listening boosts the ego of the person (speaker), shows that you care, helps you understand people and satisfies probably the most important need of people, 'having someone who listens to you'. Rachel Naomi Remen notes, “The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.” Also, if you put yourself in other person's shoes, you will be able to understand their problems better and may be able to help by suggesting right solutions.

Courage

“Life is best lived by being bold and daring. People tend to grow fearful when they taste failure, face a daunting challenge or fall ill. Yet that is precisely the time to become even bolder. Those who are victors at heart are the greatest of all champions.”



Dr Daisaku Ikeda

Merriam Webster's Dictionary defines courage as, “mental or moral strength to venture, persevere and withstand danger, fear or difficulty. It also implies firmness of mind or will.”

Letting go of fear contributes to our sanity and expands our consciousness; where-as fear tends to hold us back, distorts our perceptions and reduces our faith. Asserting our courage tends to be different (from letting go of fear) as we tend to be more proactive in confronting the situation or our fears. A cold drink advertisement rightly points out, “Everyone has fears. Everyone gets a dry throat. Victory lies ahead of fear.”

Even a brief prayer can give us the courage to confront a difficult day though God's answers may not always be on the expected lines. It may come as the strength to fight on or give us the courage to accept realities which we may be denying.



Dr Daisaku Ikeda says, “Strength is happiness. Strength is itself victory. In weakness and cowardice there is no happiness. When you wage a struggle, you might win or you might lose. But regardless of the short term outcome, the very fact of your continuing to struggle is proof of your victory as a human being. “

Anyone can dream but it is difficult to gather the courage to convert dreams into reality. Praying to God asking for the energy and the courage to realize our dreams can be very helpful

“
“
*“It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll.
I am the master of my fate
I am the captain of my soul.”*
”

William Henley





9 Use Intuition for Clarity in Decision Making

Albert Camus says, “Man is the only creature that refuses to be what he is.” So true! The universe is ready to provide limitless information, which we can receive at conscious and unconscious levels, but we build barriers and refuse to be what we can be.

What are the barriers which stop this natural flow of information? Are these barriers internal or external? How do we break these barriers? These are some of the questions which come to mind as we grapple to use our intuition to make decisions. As we develop our intuitive abilities, we must simultaneously struggle with forces such as fear, negativity, stress and lack of faith in higher consciousness, which act as blocks.

Undoubtedly, the best tool to break and destroy these barriers is spirituality. Once we are able to do that our decision making (one of the most critical skills for entrepreneurship and leadership) becomes very easy and natural. In the beginning of our spiritual journey, questions keep arising in our mind. As we progress we receive a few hints at answers and then later on these evolve into complete answers. Over a period of time a strong sense of intuition starts emerging, which gradually replaces our common intelligence.

Intuition is defined as the direct experiencing of a truth without any reasoning or perception. It is a ‘higher knowledge’ - a spiritual gift full of vitality and inspiration. It enables us to get an answer almost immediately which otherwise may have taken months, years, decades or even a lifetime. All insights that we get are not intuitive and they can come from other sources as well such as instinct, feeling, thinking, interpretation or association.



With intuition you know why something happens, the reason behind it, what you are learning, what is its significance, and what is possible and what is not. If you have no immediate answers to these questions then you are probably dealing with sources other than intuition.



Instinct is often confused with intuition. Instinct is a lower subliminal form of knowing based primarily on history. Then again, feeling is a kind of an inner urge to do something based on the subconscious. Thinking is based on rationality and what others have taught you. Interpretation is when you think you know what the situation or the other person means and association is the emotional baggage of the past.

Intuition occurs beyond the rational mind and senses. As one learns to still the mind through observation, contemplation, breathing and focused meditation, one develops a level of consciousness which is more open to intuition and sixth sense perception. Intuition is not merely an 'addition' to the five senses, it is rather an intensification of them. Basically, spirituality is an inner knowing and you need to be intuitive to be spiritual.

As said earlier, the most important spiritual tool is 'meditation' and learning to live in the moment is the simplest form of meditation. Unfortunately, due to all the clatter of the modern world, living in the moment is hard to do. However, one can practice this by continually paying attention to the energy sent into the universe. But take note, despite our best intentions, very often the energy sent out is from our ego and it is negative.

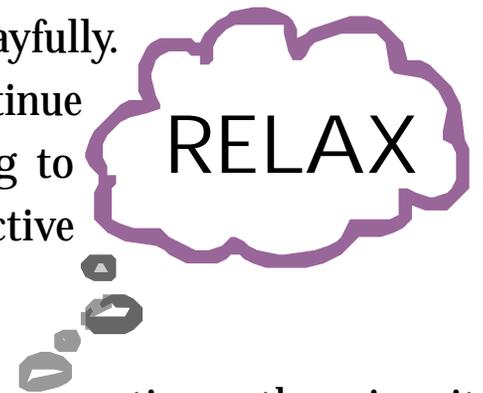
Albert Einstein says, “The intellect has little to do on the road to discovery. There comes a leap in consciousness, call it intuition or what you will and the solution comes to you and you don't know how or why.” The more time you spend with yourself, your intuition increases. Meditation helps centre, focus and align oneself to higher energies and awareness states.

Rumi says, “Go within; hear the story of sunrise from the Sun itself.” Once you are firmly connected with the Divine within, you can readily access your spiritual abilities or develop new ones. Initially it is a one off experience but with more practice – the blissful state can be achieved within minutes of focusing. Patience and perseverance are necessary besides detachment with the results. This is critical because when one follows or does certain spiritual deeds for the want of a result - the result evades the doer (as the energy is diverted or wasted in focusing on results).

Jansenius says, “Intuition is energy which needs to be nurtured and educated. Acting upon our intuition develops it and we need to first of all trust our intuition. In a way, it is nothing short of guidance from the Divine. The more we consciously connect with our surroundings and pay attention to the 'still small voice within' the more we will be able to develop our intuition.” Deepak Chopra sums it up perfectly, “The soul is observer, knower, creator, visionary and divine simultaneously.”



Intuition is sharpened just as any other skill. Access it frequently and do it playfully. Using intuition with a sense of gratitude encourages the Universe to continue making suggestions. God or higher consciousness has always been trying to communicate with us; it's just that we seldom picked up the call! Active Imagination, (a technique developed by Carl Jung in the early 20th century) is an excellent technique for improving communication with Higher Consciousness. But we must remember that intuition has to be followed up by



action otherwise it

will only become another cause of suffering.

We need to recognize and acknowledge that a spirit world exists to guide us. Sometimes one gets messages in the form of visual symbols or pictures and sometimes it tells you what is about to happen. Another theory in this realm is by Rupert Sheldrake's Morphic Resonance which states that all species are interconnected not just by genes but by a field of consciousness that is like a collective memory and to which we can connect directly. Through this resonance, intuition sometimes gives us sudden insights and premonitions and this faculty increases with practice.

Another simple technique to develop intuition is to just close your eyes and believe in higher consciousness. If we ask questions in the right state of mind during relaxation and meditation, the insights tend to be intuitive and correct for our higher selves. Or you can go to natural spots and connect with Mother Nature. Gratitude is critical for developing intuition (as it washes away negative emotions) and you must start your day by being grateful and live it joyfully as a gift from the Supreme Being.

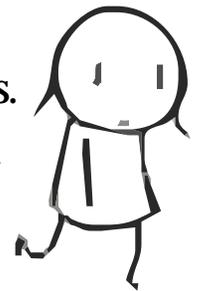
John Murphy has formulated a simple tool called 'The Ring of Peace', a model that helps raise intuition and consciousness. The four steps are Let Be, Let Go, Let See and Let Flow; which are then repeated as a cycle.



four-step, cyclic
Be, Let Go, Let See

With Let Be, we live in the moment. We feel gratitude and appreciate silence, meditate, or at least contemplate everything we do. If we fail to "Let Be" what already is, we live in a state of anxiety, fear and denial.

With Let Go, we release all tension, guilt, grief, fear, doubt and ego temptations and barriers. If we fail to "Let Go," we live in a state of resistance and attachments, resisting the natural flow of life by clinging to past memories, subconscious beliefs, etc. These attachments prevent us from feeling free.



When we 'Let See', we see the world very differently. Some of the people and things we earlier found annoying, now appear to us in a different perspective. We experience more meaningful connections and therefore become more creative and playful.

This leads to 'Let Flow', a state of being in effortless joy and grace. The more we practice 'The Ring of Peace', the more peace and grace we experience. Being a spiritual model, 'The Ring of Peace' is holistic in nature. There really is no single most important step and all of them are actually happening simultaneously when activated, as if merging into one another. In other words, when we are in flow, we have let be, let go, and let see. We 'allow' flow though it was always there. Spiritualists believe that we all are in bright daylight with a blind fold and to return to our true compassionate nature, the only thing we need to do is to remove the blindfold.



If you are at a lower level of consciousness, beset by fear, right/wrong and so on, then you are unable to experience the spiritual gifts of intuitive abilities. Fear keeps us from experiencing the Divine within each of us. You need to drop all expectations, attachment and cultural traditions to let the truth appear. People who tend to train their intuition will notice that some substances also block their development e.g. alcohol, soft and hard drugs, certain medicines, and so on.

For those who already have strong sense of intuition, they can advance further with the help of Shamanism and Kundalini Reiki which work directly with the intuition. A silent Zen retreat of 10-days or a Vipassana course or a Vision Quest can also be undertaken for further advancement.

“Depend more upon the intuitive forces from within and not hearken so much to that of the outside influences, but learn to listen.”

Edgar Cayce





10 Stay Alert to your Surroundings

“Awareness is the flower which blooms but never dies, but keeps on growing as we grow in awareness.”

Anonymous

With the ever increasing pressures of a materialistic society, we are becoming increasingly absent-minded. We fail to fully notice the people (and their actions and behavior) around us, leave alone things like nature. The stress is taking the light away from our mind, causing the opposite of enlightenment, an ‘endarkment’.

To become more aware and bring back the lost light to our minds, the first thing which we need to do is to live in the moment. But that seems too difficult for people today as we either live in the past (the guilt, the grudges, the memories) or we live in the future (the expectations, the plans, the worries) and thus the gift of the present is ruined in the process. Living in the moment in itself is a type of meditation (called mindfulness). Mindfulness is an opportunity to let you experience joy and appreciate the present moment.



It is all the more important for entrepreneurs and business leaders to live the moment as it produces a clarity which helps to keenly observe human behavior and situations. In fact, we can say that “Awareness is the beginning of the leadership journey. Self-awareness is the beginning of the awareness journey. Spirituality is the beginning of the self-awareness journey.”

Meditation can be a tool suitable for everyone to begin spirituality. Being compassionate adds effectiveness to the meditation process. J. Krishnamurti says, “The flowering of meditation is goodness and generosity of the heart is the beginning of meditation.” Meditation provides rest to our restless mind & spirit; just like the sleep gives rest to the body.

Look to nature with, whole-heartedness and soak its peace, into every fiber of your being. The more aware we are of ourselves, the more aware we can be of our true desires and intentions. The more our intentions are aligned with our inner being and our life's purpose, the happier and more fulfilled we will be. We can also gain insight into our unique talents and deepest passions (gifted to us by higher consciousness or God) by reflecting on our life experiences and connecting with our higher or true self. If we have to define self-awareness we can say it refers to the conscious understanding of our thoughts, feelings and actions and how we relate to people and the environment. Increased self-awareness can help us gain deep insights into not only the factors that influence our external world but also our internal beliefs, values and morals.

Pray, chant and meditate to increase your self-awareness (with detachment from outcomes) and develop a flexible attitude towards change. Remember self-awareness is a process, not a destination. Your motive should be centered on compassion and respect for humankind. To help you tide through the bad phases and obstacles, network with like-minded individuals and develop rock solid determination.



The morning or the beginning of the day is the best period to meditate. A friend explained, “Once I have become still and gone through a process of expanding my awareness, I feel connected to everything inside and out, there is no difference between me and all that surrounds me, it just is! I then imagine looking down upon my physical self and hold that for as long as it feels appropriate, this is the part that strengthens my witness. After my meditation practice is complete, I feel grounded, connected, clear, calm and ready to embrace my day.”

If you connect with the deeper states of awareness on a daily basis, your whole life becomes a meditation. Watching your mind enables you to actively see what does not serve you and let such thoughts simply fall away. But remember communication with higher consciousness on earth is difficult as the body is being pulled by gravity one way and the mind by the ego another!



In awareness meditation (a type of meditation) one simply observes what is coming up in awareness by naming or expressing loudly what is being experienced, “I am aware of the pen on the table.” “I am aware that traffic jams make me very uncomfortable.” Most people tend to lose track after repeating it three or four times. The exercise, if repeated, provides complete calm and clarity leading to deep awareness. As the mind calms down, you notice even subtle things and find that you start naming thoughts, feelings, and sensations as soon as they arise.

For a person who is truly aware, it is easy to connect with his consciousness to seek wisdom, happiness and emotional strength from his own spirit. Our best Guru looks back at us in the mirror. So get in touch with your inner wisdom.

I recall a Facebook post of mine,

“A childish person seeks knowledge, a growing up person seeks wisdom and a grown up person seeks awareness.”



Developing self-awareness is like setting up the centre of our life. Benjamin E. Mays rightly says, “The circumference of life cannot be rightly drawn until the center is set.” When we actively inquire into what is actually occurring rather than our filters or perceptions of what is occurring (within ourselves), we are able to set the centre.

After self awareness, comes awareness of our surroundings. People with high levels of awareness can see the gifts that others have even before they themselves are aware of them. For instance, you may become aware, that the old ways of managing and directing employees are no longer effective and a paradigm shift in approach may be required. To become truly aware we need to look at our surroundings with all our senses. One needs to look into eyes, hearts and souls of people around to feel what they feel, to know what they think, expect or desire. With such enhanced awareness you will be able to command genuine respect as an entrepreneur and business leader.

With increased awareness levels we start realizing, “We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are”, and this enables us to identify our own biases and prejudices. Awareness is accelerated by confronting our inner wounds, which create "buffers" that shut down consciousness and prevent us from noticing things that do not support our limited identity. Noticing what drives us from moment to moment is definitely an excellent window into our self. We need to accept not just what we like but be willing to engage in being fully human.

*“The aim of life is to live, and
to live means to be aware, joyously,
drunkenly, serenely, divinely aware.”*

Henry Miller





1 1 Become Holistic & Attain Balance



"When your determination changes, everything will begin to move in the direction you desire. The moment you resolve to be victorious, every nerve and fiber in your being will immediately orient itself toward your success. On the other hand, if you think, "This is never going to work out," then at that instant every cell in your being will be deflated and give up the fight. Everything will then really move in the direction of failure."

Daisaku Ikeda

Holistic means emphasizing the importance of the whole and the interdependence of its parts. In simple words, according to the holistic approach, only the system determines how the parts behave and each part cannot be evaluated individually. The concept of holism was first popularized by Aristotle.

When we talk of holistic living, it means taking care of the entire system including physical and mental health, emotional and spiritual well-being, relationships and financial/material prosperity. The sad truth is that though holistic living is catching on in popularity, we are still too focused on material success ignoring or compromising other aspects and resulting in faster burn-outs. Life is a marathon and not a 100-metre race, a fact which we often conveniently forget. The social pressures for success at a young age and the pressure or greed to earn more and more is resulting in most of the ills that society faces today.





In the area of development we are gradually moving to sustainability and as individuals as well we need to move towards sustainable success. Sustainable success means a success which is sustained for a lifetime (or at least for a very long time).

Sustainable Success = PQ + IQ + EQ + SQ (Physical, Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Quotient)

The world is running the rat race, unaware that it's a sheer waste of time. By the time they realize this fact, unfortunately it will be too late. Sometimes I joke, "The time when slow and steady won the race has gone. Today fast and steady wins the race. But post-race he is a burn-out."

Today's companies extract the best out of our youth. One can become a CEO at 35, afford to retire at 40 and after that there is nothing left. Family and friends are emotionally disconnected (because we had no time for them); health is in poor shape and the spirit is lost due to all this. The candle which lights bright, lights shorter.

Bryan Dyson, Former CEO of Coca-Cola says, "Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling some five balls in the air. They are work, family, health, friends and spirit and you are keeping all of these in the air. You will soon understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. But the other four balls family, health, friends and spirit are made of glass. If you drop one of these; they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged or even shattered. They will never be the same. You must understand that and strive for it."



ISO work efficiently during office hours and leave on time. Give the required time to your family, friends and have proper rest. And remember, being a workaholic is also an addiction.

“All comes by the body; only health puts you in rapport with the universe.”

Walt Whitman





12 Connect with People

“You should become the kind of individual who is sought after by everyone. People should say of you, ‘There is certain brightness about him. He makes me feel at ease, inspiring me and giving me a new sense of courage.’”

Dr Daisaku Ikeda

In my opinion, there can be three legitimate approaches to become highly successful viz. getting prestigious degrees (like Harvard), having successful relatives/parents or the ability to connect well with people. If you belong to the first two categories, you are probably already very successful and perhaps would not be reading this book. But if you belong to the third category, the good news is that you can use spiritual tools to connect well with successful people and inspire trust, getting their support and becoming successful yourself. Even if you have basic trust in people, you can build upon that ability and learn to connect with them.



It's easier to connect and build lasting relationships if one gets slightly informal. After all people are not machines and though some prefer to remain highly professional, most have an emotional element with which one can connect.

Once you get into spirituality, you develop an innate wisdom about where to draw the line with people and ensuring that the human touch you give to relationships does not harm you professionally. This technique must be used with caution and if you have doubts pertaining to your wisdom or the sensitivities of others, you would be better off not using it.

In a country like India, people easily warm up to relationships and get slightly informal. However, keep in mind the comfort zones of both parties. Though it has been my experience that people connected with spirituality have higher levels of trust for each other.

“In Japan, the mountain potatoes known as taros are rough and dirty when harvested, but when they are placed in a basin of running water together and rolled against each other, the skin peels away, leaving the potatoes shining clean and ready for cooking. Similarly, the only way for us to hone and polish our character is through our interactions with others.”

Dr Daisaku Ikeda

Let's take a particular example. Calling a person by first name is a good technique for getting informal (its common in USA and some western countries). Getting connected on Facebook (a more informal platform compared to LinkedIn) is another example (If you do not wish to show family photographs and other personal information, you can have a separate Facebook account). Ultimately, bonding with others creates its own spiritual strength.

“When praised highly by others, one feels that there is no hardship one cannot bear. Such is the courage that springs from words of praise.”

Nichiren Daishonin

Discover Common Interests for Deeper Bonds

Once the ice is broken between you and another, you will find it easier to develop a deeper bond by discovering common interests. An excellent strategy for building close relationships and connecting faster with people is to play sports together, especially outdoor sports. No wonder Golf often brings business leaders together and helps people in striking billion dollar deals.

It's critical that you inspire trust in people otherwise they would rather stay strictly professional and maintain a distance. There are some disadvantages though, like not being able to say no to someone with whom you have become informal and close. So be careful & selective in using the strategy. Sometime ago, I had gone with my boss to negotiate a deal with the Marketing Head of a prominent media company in India. We were meeting for the first time and had a long hard session of negotiation. However, once the negotiations were successfully concluded, we were offered tea and an informal chat began. You can see that each situation demands its own discretion.

The degree of informality you can use depends upon several factors viz. negotiation skills, administrative skill, maturity level, basic nature/personality, cultural values and so on. Some people tend to take undue advantage if one gets informal with them. So its better to get informal slowly and observe the reactions of the other person. We need to see the divine in other people but at the same time we need to be smart enough to safeguard our interests.



Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, the Indian Spiritual Guru says, “Bring out the Divine qualities in the people around you; take this as your mission. I am not telling you to be naïve. Be careful; at the same time bring out good qualities.” After all, life is all about maintaining a delicate balance.



“Let us give something to each person we meet: joy, courage, hope, assurance, philosophy, wisdom, a vision for the future. Let us always give something.”

Dr Daisaku Ikeda





13 The Action Begins; Hard work has no Substitute



“Beethoven is called a genius. But we need to be ware that his genius was based on incredibly strenuous effort... Beethoven's motto was, 'No day without a line.' Every day without fail he wrote music. He would not let even a single day pass without working assiduously.”

Dr Daisaku Ikeda



The action must begin now, for hard work has no substitute. Success is sweet but its secret is sweat. If you have found your true passion, it will not even appear as hard work but will seem more like a play. If you give 100 percent and keep at it with perseverance, success has to come, sooner or a little later. We have huge ambitions these days (for example, becoming world famous) which require time and patience. It can take years to get international success and build your image, though some people can be exceptionally lucky or may succeed rapidly into a new and uncompetitive field.

“You are what you do. If you do boring, stupid, monotonous work, chances are you'll end up being boring, stupid, and monotonous.”

Bob Black

How is Hard Work Connected with Spirituality?

If you have used spiritual tools to become a positive person, you will start inviting positive people and positive vibrations into your life and these are bound to energize you and increase your capacity for hard work. You will be able to cut down on your sleep and still feel the same energy. Spirituality holds the potential to tremendously increase your work capacity.

Work with Detachment

According to spiritual principles everything in this universe is energy including matter. If you focus too much on results, you tend to divert energy which could have been used for work. The *Bhagwad Geeta* says, “Do your work and do not worry about the fruit.” The result is bound to come, though it may sometimes take time due to our lack of wisdom or bad Karma. We cannot measure our bad Karma or calculate the time for results to manifest. The only thing we can control is our efforts. As human beings we are bound to get discouraged at times and this is when positive people in your environment will help.

If I have to Work Hard and Succeed, I do not Need Spirituality

If this is the thought crossing your mind, let me clear your doubts. Firstly, everyone who works hard does not succeed (a huge difference exists between donkeys and horses) and hard work must be supported by ‘smart work’ (through wisdom and divine inspiration gained from meditation).

Secondly, if you have found your true passions (which are difficult to discover without spiritual tools), you are hardly working - rather you're enjoying. The flip side of this gift is that at times you enjoy your work so much, you tend to ignore family, friends and even your own health. Passion must be combined with wisdom to strike a balance.

“ Inspirational Quotes on Work and Passion ”

I'd rather be a failure at something I love than a success at something I hate. – George Burns

My mother said to me, “If you become a soldier, you'll be a general, if you become a monk you'll end up as the pope.” Instead, I became a painter and wound up as Picasso. – Pablo Picasso

He who would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying. – Nietzsche

We either make ourselves miserable, or we make ourselves strong. The amount of work is the same. - Carlos Castaneda, Peruvian born American Anthropologist and Author

When you're following your energy and doing what you want all the time, the distinction between work and play dissolves. – Shakti Gawain, Pioneering Author & Teacher in the field of Personal Growth

If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you, and the life that you ought to be living is the one you are living. Wherever you are—if you are following your bliss, you are enjoying that refreshment, that life within you, all the time. – Joseph Campbell, American Mythologist, Writer, and Lecturer

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*Work -- work -- work
Till the brain begins to swim,
Work -- work -- work
Till the eyes are heavy and dim*

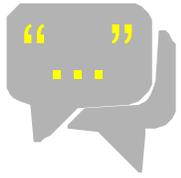
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(The Song of the Shirt by Thomas Hood)





14 Believe to Achieve -
Realize your Godliness



“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It is not just in some of us; it is in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.”

Marianne Williamson

What is Self-Belief After All?

Self belief is confidence in our own abilities or judgment. It has a strong connection with faith. The term faith is generally used for faith in God or a higher power but faith in self means self-belief. If the divine is within you, why should anything be impossible? The real issue is to connect with the divine within us and then harness its powers for the benefits of self, family and society.

Our beliefs determine our actions and our actions determine the results but first - we need to believe. We must remember that the depth of our beliefs and the strength of our conviction determine the power of our personality. Remember that the human mind has no limits. The more focused it is, the more power is brought to bear on any given point.

Spirituality is the 'commando training' of the mind and the soul; it breaks our mental barriers and helps us set new standards and new beliefs. I am reminded of a line from the Bible, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever BELIEVETH in him will not perish but have everlasting life."

Belief in one's abilities to perform an activity comes through successful experiences and may add to, or consolidate, a general sense of self-confidence. Belief has immense power. Nichiren Daishonin says, "The mighty warrior General Li Kuang, whose mother had been devoured by a tiger, shot an arrow at the stone he believed was the tiger. The arrow penetrated the stone all the way up to its feathers. But once he realized it was only a stone, he was unable to pierce it again. Later he came to be known as General Stone Tiger."

Silence the Inner Critic

Most of us have an inner critic, which keeps telling us that we are stupid and not good enough. This derogatory inner voice has to be reprogrammed, refashioned into a voice which appreciates and supports us.

The tricky part is that often we are not even aware of our inner critic and we let it take over in many situations. So we need to understand what our inner critic sounds like and how it influences our thoughts and actions. Only then we can start to move into a more healthy way of being.



The Power of Prayer

A sample prayer to improve your self-image and basic belief system is given below, though you can develop your own prayer and add specific personal needs.



“Dear God, thank you that you love and accept me as I am. Please help me to do the same and to grow to become the person you want me to be so that my self-confidence will increase greatly. Thank you for hearing and answering my prayer. “

“Why is it that sometimes our prayers seem not to be answered? So that we can deepen our prayers, become stronger people, live more profound lives and secure deeper, more lasting good fortune. If our slightest prayer was answered immediately, we would become lazy and degenerate. And we could not hope to build a life of great dignity and substance.”



Dr Daisaku Ikeda

Life Force and Enthusiasm

A person who lives life to the fullest, glowing with energy is successful in the truest sense. Walter Pater rightly says, “To burn always with this hard, gemlike flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life.”

Each action of ours, even if the most insignificant, must be full of life force. Nichiren Daishonin says, “The Lion King is said to advance three steps, then gather himself to spring, unleashing the same power whether he traps a tiny ant or attacks a fierce animal.” Let us have complete enthusiasm in each and everything we do, including the smallest matters. Subrata Roy Sahara, Indian industrialist says, “If we take care of the small things, big things will take care of themselves.”

“
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*Only as high as I reach can I grow,
Only as far as I seek can I go,
Only as deep as I look can I see,
Only as much as I dream can I be.*”
”

Karen Ravn





15 ...And Abundance
will Flow



There is a famous saying, “There is enough for everyone's need but not enough for a single man's greed.”

The Science behind Prayer, Chanting & Meditation

We started this book with the concept of the scientific nature of spirituality and we will end with the same. I want to emphasize simple scientific principle behind prayer, chanting and meditation. Most of us would agree that if we stop the chatter of the mind, we shall be able to think clearly which in turn will help us in making better (and probably wiser) decisions. So, if you're a very scientific person, focus on this aspect and silence your mind using spiritual tools.

So, as you proceed on this journey, open your arms, heart and mind and get set to welcome the abundance which the universe is going to send to you. May the force be with you!

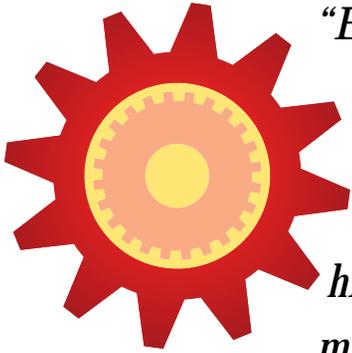
A Final Dose of Inspiration

“There are two things to aim at in life; first, to achieve what you want; and, after that, to enjoy it. Only the wisest of mankind achieve the second.”

Logan Pearsall Smith

“The resolve to accomplish your goals is what counts. If you earnestly put your mind to something, your brain, your body, your environment-everything will start working towards achieving that end.”

Dr Daisaku Ikeda



“Every day we slaughter our finest impulses. That is why we get a heart-ache when we read those lines written by the hand of a master and recognize them as our own, as the tender shoots which we stifled because we lacked the faith to believe in our own powers, our own criterion of truth and beauty. Every man, when he gets quiet, when he becomes desperately honest with himself, is capable of uttering profound truths. We all derive from the same source. There is no mystery about the origin of things. We are all part of creation, all kings, all poets, all musicians; we only have to open up, to discover what is already there.”

Henry Miller

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? “

Gospel of Mark 8:36

“Please remember that patience is in and of itself a great challenge, and that it often holds the key to breaking through a seeming impasse.”

Dr Daisaku Ikeda

“Rather than worrying about your future, thinking, 'Perhaps I should become this or perhaps I should become that,' first be still and build a self that is as solid and unmoving as Mount Fuji.”

Eiji Yoshikawa

“There is no need to seek impatiently for greatness, fame or wealth. The Earth and the Sun do not hurry; they follow their own path at their own pace. If the Earth were to accelerate and complete one rotation in three hours instead of twenty four, we would be in big trouble! The most important thing in life, too, is to find a sure and certain path and confidently advance along it.”

Dr Daisaku Ikeda



Happy Succeeding!!!