9

Building Blocks of Personal Empowerment

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"Power can be taken, but not given.
The process of the taking is empowerment in itself."

~Gloria Steinem

Introduction

Are you pleased with your life journey? How do you spend your days? Do you engage in projects that bring fulfillment to you?

When you're living a life of personal empowerment, your passion will overflow onto those around you. And as the passion permeates the very air you breathe, you'll feel confident and in control of your life because you can produce all the things you want for yourself and your loved ones.

This guide will help you live an empowered life. If you follow through with these suggestions and obtain the support you require, your personal power will flourish. Start living the life of your dreams!

1. Resolve to Succeed

When you decide to succeed, a life filled with adventure, love, and personal empowerment is yours.

Try these strategies to ensure you're consistently working toward success:

1. **Assess your self-confidence.** Do you believe in yourself and know that you can do anything you put your mind to? What are your strengths?

    - When you know your strong points, you can capitalize on them and get ahead in life.
    - ***Playing to your strengths will ensure you stay on the road to success and boost your personal power a few notches.***

2. **Ask yourself what success means to you.** Will you consider yourself a success when you make a certain yearly salary, have a specific type of lifestyle, or live in a particular place?

    - If you were to finish this sentence, "Success for me would be...," what would you say?
    - Establish your own meaning of success and then live in a way that helps you achieve it.

Making a conscious decision to be successful is an effective way of opening up yourself to the possibilities of achieving your dreams. ***When you decide that something will happen, you're more likely to take the necessary steps to ensure that it does.*** Resolving to succeed is a hallmark of personal empowerment.

> "When Nike says, just do it, that's a message of empowerment. Why aren't the rest of us speaking to young people in a voice of inspiration?"
>
> ***~Naomi Klein***

2. Believe Positive Things Will Happen

Sometimes in life, difficult things occur that might discourage you from pursuing the path you desire. ***An important aspect of becoming personally empowered is to believe that bright and beautiful things are coming your way, regardless of the rough waters you may have recently encountered.***

When you're sure that positive things will happen to you, your empowerment level rises.

Putting these strategies into action will pump up your belief in the positive:

1. **Train yourself to notice the positive.** Some days, events in your life can present great challenges. However, if you can teach yourself to consistently focus on the positive aspects of people, places, and things, you'll open your eyes and start taking advantage of life's many possibilities.

    - For example, maybe your co-worker received the promotion you've dreamed of getting. If you look at the positive aspects of your current position, you'll be inspired to continue your quest for a job you love and deserve.

- You could say, "I'm already good at this job, so now I'll have time to be great" or "I'm going to make this next year my personal best in terms of work performance."

2. **Hang out with people who achieve their goals.** It's usually pretty simple to spot successful people. They pay their bills on time and take good care of their families. They excel at work and are always offering a helping hand to someone who needs it. Their positivity is practically contagious.

    - Your confidence will be buoyed when you see the progress others make to accomplish their life goals. ***Spending time with high-achievers will allow you to observe firsthand how to become goal-oriented and remain positive.***

3. **Give yourself the benefit of the doubt.** Even though you'll likely make a mistake or two on the road to personal empowerment, learn to see those errors as necessary detours from your path. When you elect to be positive about your missteps, you'll be less inclined to get held back by negativity.

    - Saying something as simple as, "Everyone makes mistakes and that was one of mine" reminds you of your fallibility as a human being and allows you to move on with a renewed spirit.

A positive mind breeds positive results. Approaching all aspects of life with positivity is one of the most empowering actions you can take.

"At every given moment we are absolutely perfect for what is required for our journey."

~Steve Maraboli,
Life, the Truth, and Being Free

3. Keep Your Dreams Fresh

Even if you haven't thought about it for quite some time, you probably have something you've always wanted to do in life. Do you still have those yearnings for the future? How do you react when you're thinking about your dreams? Do you try to push those thoughts out of your mind?

Never abandon your dreams! Our dreams for the future can keep us moving forward in life, looking, reaching, and achieving. View your dreams as great motivators. Your dreams help empower you to seek out the life you truly want.

Put these strategies into action today to keep your dreams fresh and alive:

1. **Think about your dreams each day.** It sounds simple, but how often do you really reflect on your dreams? Each morning as you're brushing your teeth, look yourself in the eyes and think about what you'll specifically do that day to move toward accomplishing your dreams.

    - For example, if someday you want to move to New York City, spend an hour after work exploring the

streets and neighborhoods of The Big Apple on your computer.

2. **Create a vision board.** Fill your board with symbols that represent your dreams. ***The key ingredients of a vision board are photos and printed words that signify the things you want most in life.***

    - For example, in keeping with the dream of moving to New York City, you could find some photos in magazines of buildings in New York and signs of the places you'd love to frequent there, like the Met, Broadway, and Long Island.
    - Cut out those photos and put them on your vision board. Write down some words to show your excitement about your dream like, "I want to see all the shows on Broadway" or "I'm moving to New York" and include them on your board.
    - Place your board where you can see it daily.
    - ***When you look at your vision board, you can mentally see it happening.*** This will empower you to live your desired life.

3. **Talk about your dreams.** When your dreams are alive in your thoughts and words, you're closer to making them happen.

    - Have coffee with a friend and share what you discovered when exploring the aspects of one of your dreams or tell your parents what you want to

do. It helps a great deal when others are talking about you and your dreams as well.

4. **Take a trip and explore your dream location or devote time to your life goals.** Keeping your dream in the forefront means you'll have tangible bits of it always with you until you can actually make it happen. So, if you yearn to move to a particular locale, visit the area occasionally to soak in the sights and sounds of it.

    - When you set aside time for activities related to your dreams, it empowers you by letting you see that you can one day bring those dreams to fruition.

Holding on to your dreams throughout your life will provide you with steady reinforcement to perform, excel, and achieve. As your dreams stay alive, so do your possibilities to live an empowered life.

"Whether you say you can't or you can, you're right."

~Walt Disney Company

4. Change Your Mind to Change Your Life

You might find yourself in a particular place in life that's not satisfying to you. When you consider your living situation, you may feel unsure about how or why you ended up this way.

When you find yourself in a position or heading in a direction different from what you'd like, ***remind yourself you have the power to change your path.*** Upon reaching this point, knowing how to change your mind and your life are incredibly empowering forces.

When you're ready, take advantage of these tips to alter your existence:

1. **Acknowledge where you are.** Take note of what you'd like to change about your life. Realize that whatever you're currently doing is preventing you from reaching your ultimate goal.

    - Bringing the facts into your awareness will help tremendously in terms of determining that you need to alter your course.

2. **Weigh the pros and cons.** After discovering you want to alter something in your life, consider completing a pro and con list regarding your changes.

- When you review the pluses and minuses before you make a decision, you're informed about the impact the change will have on your life. Then, you'll be ready for the challenges that change may bring.

3. **Institute the changes immediately.** As soon as you've determined the direction you want to go and why, begin making at least one alteration as soon as possible.

    - ***If you thoroughly thought things through and arrived at the conclusion to change, there's no time like the present to begin turning the life you have into the life you seek.***

4. **Tweak things if necessary.** After you shift gears and institute some of the changes, you may notice some other minor things you could do to be headed more directly toward your goal. Go ahead and make the adjustments without holding back.

Allow yourself the time and space to change the things about your life that are leading you astray. When you're fully following your dreams, you'll feel empowered and ignited with the passion to create the life you seek.

"Some men have thousands of reasons why they cannot do what they want to, when all they need is one reason why they can."

~Martha Graham

5. Take Action: Go After What You Want

Have you ever felt like you wanted to live life differently than how you're currently living, yet you're unsure where to begin? Your dreams have always been in the back of your mind, tantalizing you to do something. However, you feel uncertain about how your life will go when you do begin the path toward the good life.

Follow these steps for how to begin to live the very life you've always wanted:

1. **Know that you deserve to have the life you want.** Rather than saying, "My partner wouldn't want me to do this" or "My life will be harder if I give up the salary I make now to pursue my dreams," consider the idea that you deserve the life you long for, regardless of what it takes to do it.

    - ***When you truly connect with the fact that you're entitled to have everything you want, those feelings will push you forward toward empowerment.***

2. **Think it through and problem-solve.** Refuse to let discouraging thoughts stop you. Talk to your partner if you fear they may not support you. Listen to their position and then share your hopes and dreams with them.

- Ponder together how you could live on less money, if that's what it will take to get what you yearn for.

3. **Complete the first step toward your dream now.** If you want to become an actor, take an acting class in the evenings at a local college or university. Test the waters and incorporate your ultimate goal into your current life. ***Fit in parts of your dream whenever you can.***

   - Satisfy your craving to do what you want by taking baby steps toward it.
   - Becoming empowered is all about pursuing what you want, even if it's an inch at a time.

4. **Do your homework.** When you research what you want to accomplish, it will push you into action. Plus, doing your homework is taking action.

5. **Ask for support.** If you require childcare twice a week to pursue your interests, ask your parents, brother, sister, or friends to help you.

6. **Offer a trade.** When you require some type of assistance to pursue your dreams, mention that you'd be happy to help out your neighbor, friend, or family member with a task they want done if they're willing to assist you too.

   - For example, you could say, "I'll feed and walk your dog while you go on that get-away weekend if you can do something for me."
   - ***Using the barter system to complete tasks is a valuable tool of empowerment.*** You'll recognize that you can

practically accomplish whatever you want with the assistance of others as long as you can barter your own skills and energies.

7. **Create a step-by-step process for how to reach your desired life.** If you think concretely about what you're required to accomplish on the road to the end result, it will lead you toward your goal. Check off the steps as you achieve them.

    - Keeping with the example of wanting to move to New York City, what must you do first to eventually get there? Maybe your step one is researching the industry available there to determine if your job skills will transfer. Find out what they have to offer.

Taking action to achieve your dreams will bring feelings of strength and incredible anticipation. Imagine how it will feel to know that you've taken the bull by the horns and are heading toward the greatest adventure of your life. Living the life you want is the ultimate objective of self-empowerment.

"You know, there's a lot of activism that doesn't deal with empowerment, and you have to empower yourself in order to be relevant to any type of struggle."

~Talib Kweli

6. Be Willing to Work Hard

We've all encountered the person at work who goes so far above and beyond that they make everyone else look bad in comparison. Some of us may even admit that we wouldn't mind being that co-worker that everyone else is praising and admiring.

Begin working harder by:

1. **Showing up a few minutes early to work.** ***Your workday may go better if you're there ahead of time and ready to get started.*** Coming in early will help if you have a long walk from the parking lot to your office or you like to make the coffee and check your inbox first thing in the morning.

2. **Getting adequate rest each night.** If you want to put your heart and soul into your work, it's important to be well-rested. The more energy you have, the more effort you can expend to get your job done well.

3. **Developing real interest in your work.** If today you're catching up on the filing, ensure your mind is on putting all the records in order. Rather than seeing the job as an unimportant task that takes you from your "real work," view filing as a necessary key to doing your job.

- It's no secret that it's much easier to locate information and data when it's alphabetized and neatly filed rather than in stacks of papers on a desk.
- Put all your effort into each project you work on. When you show interest in something, the end product reflects it.

4. **Competing with yourself.** What if you were to look at tasks as a way of showing what you can do?
    - For example, when both the filing bins are filled with files to be put away, how long will it take you to do it? Two hours? Forty-five minutes?
    - Jot down your times in your calendar to see if you can beat your filing time today.
5. **Nixing the complaints.** Many of us may have complaints about what we do in a day. But it's wise to recognize that while we're complaining, we're losing our momentum with work. ***During the time we're complaining we could, instead, be accomplishing something.***
    - Reflect on what you can accomplish if you abolish voicing your disappointment with everything you're not pleased about.
6. **Establishing set times for unsavory tasks.** If filing is a task you typically find less-than-satisfying, perhaps

setting up regular time blocks to do the job will help you keep up with it and get it done efficiently.

- For example, you could set up Tuesday mornings from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. and Friday afternoons, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. as filing time.
- Scheduling a task and accomplishing it regularly is the sign of a hard worker.
- Although the work may take some time to get done, you'll complete it and do so consistently.

7. **Pushing yourself.** Just how efficient of a worker can you be? You have the personal power to become the type of employee you want to be. ***Pushing yourself to excel at work will boost your self-confidence and make you feel empowered.***

When you're willing to work hard, many positive things will happen for you. Your end results will be greater and others will come to see you as a model employee. Empower yourself with the abundance that comes with being a hard worker.

"The difference between being mediocre and achieving excellence is you."

~Stephen Richards,
Think Your Way to Success: Let Your Dreams Run Free

7. Do Something: Starting Small is Better Than Not Starting at All

If you've ever felt bogged down with everyday life, you'll appreciate the beauty of starting small. Rather than not starting at all, beginning little-by-little seems like a much better option.

Start small on your journey to personal empowerment by:

1. **Doing something even if you're unsure.** There once was a guy who said, "Let's do something, even if it's wrong."

    - The idea behind this statement is empowering because it implies that, even though you're unsure about how to go about putting your dreams into action, you can try something that could eventually lead you toward your goal.

2. **Pushing through the feelings of fear.** It's natural to feel afraid when you want to embark on a new adventure. You might be unnerved at the idea of moving in the direction of the life you've always dreamed about. Avoid letting fear hold you back.

3. **Keeping promises you make to yourself.** Even the smallest step forward can be a powerful indicator that what you promise yourself matters and that you believe in what you're doing.

    - Following through on your promises brings you one step closer to your goals.

True empowerment begins with thought, effort, and follow-through. Only you can refresh your existence and begin living a more empowered life.

"On the other hand, if the future is not the one you chose then you may have to use your willpower to obtain the future of your liking."

~Stephen Richards,
Think your way to Success: Let Your Dreams Run Free

8. Keep Moving Forward

As you start putting these suggestions into place, you'll begin to gain the momentum to continue moving ahead. ***Momentum begets more momentum.***

Keep moving forward in your efforts to build your personal empowerment by:

1. **Maintaining your list and keeping it close.** When you use paper-and-pen accountability to keep track of your goals for the day, week, and month, you'll move ahead rapidly. Become the true designer of your life!

2. **Planning blocks of time to focus on yourself.** Whether it's doing some research on the internet, reading a book on some aspect of your future, or devoting an hour writing a proposal for funding to start a non-profit organization, give yourself those moments.

    - Spend time working on your initiative and you'll travel towards a brighter future.

3. **Showing consistent effort.** Sometimes, we're charged with simply putting one foot in front of the other in order to build up our strength. When we're consistent, the direction we're heading is more apparent to us. Our spirits soar when we see the progress we're making.

You'll encounter all kinds of individuals, situations, and stumbling blocks on your journey toward empowerment. At times, you may feel like you've taken two steps forward and three steps back. By continuing to move forward, you'll make overall progress that can't be denied.

"The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step."

~Lao Tzu

9. Avoid Giving Away Your Power

Because we live our lives surrounded by others and dealing with complex events, there will be times when you're inclined to give up your power. What does this mean? ***Some behaviors or attitudes you adopt can reduce your strength and momentum.***

Ponder these points to intensify your personal power:

1. **Refuse to pay attention to what others say about you.** Being overly sensitive to the comments of others can steal your passion and stall your progress on the way to building personal empowerment.

2. **Make your own decisions.** It makes sense to listen to the opinions of those you trust and respect when you're at a crossroads in life. However, you'll ultimately be living with the choices you make. Therefore, it's best for you to select whatever you want to do.

3. **If you experience a personal crisis, stay in tune with yourself.** For example, if you go through a break-up, acknowledge how you feel and then shift gears to refocus on what's really important to you.

- When you take the stance, "I can't have a happy life ever because this happened," you're giving up your power. Instead, pay attention to what occurred and make an effort to discover the lesson provided by the experience.
- ***When you learn something during a crisis, you gain knowledge, power, and personal resolve.***

As you build your own power, be aware of how you can keep hold of your personal strength. In the end, you'll come out on the other side feeling healthier, happier, and more empowered.

"No one has the power to shatter your dreams unless you give it to them."

~Maeve Greyson

10. Conclusion

Although everyday life can be overwhelming, you have the resolve and tools to live an empowered life. ***An empowered existence allows you to make progress and eventually achieve all your goals and dreams.***

Define who you are. As you empower yourself in ways that build your self-confidence, you'll discover all the sources of your life's greatest passions.

"You were put on this earth to achieve your greatest self, to live out your purpose, and to do it fearlessly."

~Steve Maraboli,
Life, the Truth, and Being Free