

# **Life's Directions**

**The Positive Direction System**

**by Tom Mercier**

**LIFE'S DIRECTIONS**  
**THE POSITIVE DIRECTION SYSTEM**

**BY**  
**TOM MERCIER**

LIFE'S DIRECTIONS

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## **The Positive Direction System**

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## FORWARD

This is a work in progress. Many of the references are dated, and some of the ideas presented here have evolved. There are typos, misspellings, bad punctuation, terrible grammar, and other imperfections. If you are looking for a great literary work, you are in the wrong place!

This book is the result of my own personal evolution. It represents what I believe to be the fundamental truths about living as a true human being. The key is we are a spiritual, physical, and mental creatures, and we must develop and grow in all three areas to live a successful life. This book will start you down that road.

I would like to thank all those who helped in this project, but I'm not going to list names. Those who have helped know it and hopefully that alone is a small reward.

Thank You,  
*Tom Mercier*



## INTRODUCTION

This book will introduce you to the Positive Direction System, a system of goal setting, planning, and attitude development, with God at the center.

When I first wrote this work, I firmly believed that setting goals, developing plans, modifying my attitudes to be more positive, and developing a positive self-image were all that was needed to live successfully. Goals, plans, and attitudes are no doubt keys to living successfully, but are incomplete by themselves. I must cultivate a relationship with God and develop the spiritual component of my nature. This additional spiritual component impacts and overlaps the three aspects of the Positive Direction System, goals, plans, and attitudes. In fact, spirituality will influence our entire lives. My goals, plans, and attitudes must all be placed within the context of a purpose and meaning of life. Success must include the whys of life, as well as the what and how. God must be at the center of any successful life.

This program will change you and make you a better person.

This book describes the Positive Direction System. These ideas are not new. I have drawn from sources including The Bible, teachings of Buddhism, Norman Vincent Peale, Napoleon Hill, Alan Lakein, Dr. Maltz, Art Williams, Gerald May, Anthony Paone, John Powell, and many more. We must understand that all people who have achieved greatness have shared 3 very simple things: 1) A clear goal, 2) A positive attitude often influenced by spirituality, and 3) A workable plan. From stock car racing

to the stock market, it's all the same.

Right now, whether we know it or not, we are working towards a goal according to a plan and have a dominant attitude pattern, self-image, and a view of the world that shapes all of our behaviors. The Positive Direction System addresses these issues and will allow us to influence them to our advantage and to the advantage of others.

Today most of us feel lost, without a real purpose in life beyond basic survival. We feel like victims of events and circumstances. We feel the quality of life slipping away. We feel we have little or no control over our own condition and future. We feel empty and fearful.

This is an alternative!! We have the responsibility to turn things around for ourselves. The Positive Direction System will help us meet this responsibility!

The Positive Direction System will define success, identify our individual worthy goals and, most importantly, develop the positive attitudes, mindsets, values, and awarenesses needed to be truly successful. Simply, this book will help us set and achieve our goals. Life's Directions will give our lives purpose, meaning, and direction.

Included here is a list of some of the books that have provided the inspiration and direction for the Positive Direction System. I highly recommend you buy them and read them.

## SUGGESTED READING

The Bible

The Power of Positive Thinking by Normal Vincent Peale

Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill

How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life by Alan

Lakein

Psycho-Cybernetics by Dr. Maxwell Maltz



*AND JESUS SAID TO HIM,  
“YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD  
WITH ALL YOUR HEART,  
WITH ALL YOUR SOUL,  
AND ALL YOUR MIND  
THIS IS THE GREAT AND FIRST  
COMMANDMENT  
AND THE SECOND IS LIKE IT,  
YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR  
AS YOUR SELF”*

Mathew 22:37

*FOR GOD HATH NOT GIVEN US  
THE SPRIT OF FEAR:  
BUT OF POWER  
AND OF LOVE,  
AND A SOUND MIND*

2 Timothy 1:7



## BACKGROUND - CHAPTER 1

### WHERE IT ALL STARTS

Before any “self-help program” can be effective, we must see the human condition, our own life in particular, as having the real potential to be healthy, happy, successful, fulfilling, etc. The human condition is a condition of success. The problem is that most of us don’t know that we are supposed to be successful. This is due to laziness on our part, failure to recognize and develop our spiritual natures, and fear. We must see the human condition as positive and successful!

All creatures in nature are designed to be successful in their life. All “lower” animals function very efficiently at the “natural tasks” of their lives. Many say, “That’s easy, a shark, for example, just has to swim around and eat whatever shows up in front of him! Man has a brain, he dreams, and he has an imagination, desires. He doesn’t just operate on instinct. He thinks and plans.”

All of that is true; man does have a brain. And that brain creates far more than means of survival. But man, like all “lower” animals, is also designed to be successful! Man is designed to pursue positive and successful outcomes. I believe that all of mankind’s behavior is directed to a perceived positive goal!! Mankind composes symphonies and issues junk bonds, it builds cars and controls pollution, and it plants crops and builds bombs. All human behavior is done to prolong or improve life in the mind of the person doing it! I believe that people will act only if they think that act will benefit them in

some way. The person doing cocaine believes that this activity enhances their life. A person building bombs in a munitions factory believes his work makes him and his country more secure. These people are working towards a positive goal in their own minds, even if in reality it is not a positive goal. This is why having our own clearly defined worthy goals and an understanding of our true natures is so important.

Since our mind is a part of a complex system that makes up our total nature, it is important to understand that nature. I believe that humans are comprised of 3 components: 1) The Physical component, our bodies in the material world, 2) The Mental component, our emotions, memories, beliefs, attitudes, self-images, and mind sets, and 3) The Spiritual component, a timeless connection to a higher order that empowers our lives to success and gives us a sense of purpose, wholeness, and serenity. In my view, this spiritual component sits at the center of our lives, and without it, we will never be complete or fulfilled. For Christians this spiritual component is our soul and our eternal connection is with God. Our physical and mental components are widely accepted in our culture while our spiritual component is not.

Our physical natures are measurable, quantifiable. We can literally touch our physical, material nature. We can also see, hear, feel and experience through our senses the physical / material aspects of other people and things. Therefore, the physical world appears to be real and believable. By the way, our real physical world may not be real or believable.

Thanks to the science of psychology and our own personal experience, our mental nature is also widely believed to be real. Doctors talk about trauma, repressed

memories, mental disorders, and many other psychological issues. Additionally, all of us have experienced our own emotions of love, anger, joy, hate and many other feelings. We also realize that we think about things, worry and hope. However, our mental natures are not tangible or physical in any way. No one can show us a jar of hate, tell us how much love weighs, or tell us how long hope is, and yet our personal experience tell us that these mental “things” are very real. It is for these reasons that our mental natures are believed to be real and part of our total being, part of our nature.

Our spiritual nature, like our mental, is also intangible, unable to be touched or measured. However, our spiritual nature can also be proven, like our mental nature, by our experience and practice. In fact, the only way to “prove” our spiritual nature may be through our personal experience and practice. The easiest spiritual practice is prayer. If you do not believe in the spiritual nature of mankind, practice praying at least twice a day for 90 days. Don’t worry about how to pray, simply ask God for his presence and help. Prayer is a conversation with God; speak to God with truth and honest emotion, and quietly listen. Prayer works! Prayer is a very practical tool. The practice of prayer will lead us to an experience of spiritual connection. We will find peace of mind and a sense of purpose and direction unavailable from any other source. I believe that the practice and experience of prayer can “prove” the existence of our spiritual nature. I also believe that to seek out our spiritual natures and develop a relationship with a God is natural and in-born.

If you have a problem with God, substitute any other religious term that represents your higher power. If you don’t believe in any God, simply substitute Good or

Love and proceed. By the way, if you pursue good and love, you will find God.

We must always remember that in order to grow and become successful, we must nurture and develop our physical, mental, and spiritual natures. Animals operate on only physical instinct, but humans must add mental and spiritual development to live successfully. The Positive Direction System will integrate growth and development in all three key areas: physical, mental, and spiritual.

Mankind seems to have a built-in survival/success mechanism that always directs our life towards goals! This survival mechanism is in our physical and mental natures “ruled” by the brain or choice. The problem is, the same brain that makes us a “higher” animal can misdirect our behaviors to ultimately destructive ends. This happens because of poor goals, no goals, or negative attitudes. The brain can create problems in five ways: 1) It can misdirect our behaviors through incorrect perceptions which are affected by preconceived ideas, prejudice, illness, or even drugs and alcohol, 2) The brain may have incorrect or incomplete information, 3) It can have no defined goals or someone else’s goals as a target, 4) The brain’s thoughts can be dominated by negative attitudes and perceptions, and 5) The brain, due to lack of awareness, can be blocking the presence and support of God. We must try to eliminate these problem areas as best we can. We should maintain an open mind free of preconceptions and free of drugs and alcohol. We must have as much accurate and complete information as is available. We need to establish worthy goals. We must nurture positive attitudes and self image. We need a growing relationship with God. Having positive attitudes about yourself and others, based in love, as well as having defined worthy goals, will move us in a positive

direction rather than a negative one. One way of doing this is to “reload” the brain with accurate information, positive attitudes, and spirituality. We must understand that the brain believes whatever we tell it!! Tell the brain we’re beaten and worthless, and we will fail. But tell the brain that we’re positive, optimistic, full of love, ready for the challenges in life, and certain of success, and we will win!! Remember, the dominant thoughts in our mind will come true!

The following fact is the key to the Positive Direction System: I CAN PROGRAM MY LIFE TO OPTIMIZE THE INTERNAL NATURAL SURVIVAL/ SUCCESS INSTINCT!! Success is natural! It is the way it is supposed to be!

Remember that everything that comes out of our mind was first put into our mind by us! When we program the mind with a positive self-image and positive attitude, have clearly defined worthy goals, have doable plans, and base our lives in love, success is a natural outcome! It’s God given!

The mind also has the ability to tap into spiritual energies that empower the mind with wisdom and strength beyond its usual capacity. This spiritual power will support and even guide our brain’s internal drive to success. Prayer is the manner in which we connect to God. Prayer is a very practical and effective way to program our minds for successful living. The key is the integration of our spiritual powers and our natural, God given survival instincts.

The big news here is, I CAN CHANGE!! I can optimize my God given potential for my benefit and yours. Norman Vincent Peale quotes William James saying “The greatest discovery of our time is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of the mind” Peale

supports this idea by recommending people swap their existing thoughts with new, energized, creative, ideas based in faith and love. This process will then recreate our lives.

Napoleon Hill points out that we have, by our very nature, the ability to control what reaches our sub-conscious mind. Hill points out however, that most people do not exercise this control, and thus never live to their fullest potential.

Remember this simple formula: Beliefs + Attitudes = Potential.

Just in case you think that the idea of successful living is a new idea, let me quote Jesus Christ. Now you don't have to be a Christian to take advantage of the Positive Direction System, but a belief in God is necessary and always with the values taught in Christianity. Later I will talk more about the importance of the spiritual nature of man and how this impacts the Positive Direction System. For now I hope you realize, regardless of your religious affiliation or lack thereof, that Christ was tuned into the human condition and its potential. Listen to what he has to say:

From Matthew 5:26, "Behold the birds in the air, for neither do they reap nor gather into barns, and your heavenly father feedeth them. Art not you of much more value than they?"

From Matthew 7:7, "Ask and it shall be given to you: seek and you shall find: knock and it shall be opened to you."  
7:8, "For everyone that asketh, receiveth: and he that seeketh, findeth, and to him

that knocks, it shall be opened.”

From Matthew 19:26, “And Jesus said to them, with men this is impossible but with God all things are possible.”

From Matthew 21:22, “And all things whatsoever you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.”

By the way, the Bible is a fabulous book, and you should read all of it at least once whether you are a Christian or not. At least read chapters 5, 6, and 7, in the Book of Matthew. It’s painless, it will take less than an hour, and it may change your life. It also may get us thinking about our spiritual natures and the power within spirituality.

Now back to the key point. It is obvious that Christ saw no limit to the human potential. He says we will be provided for “as birds in the air.” Christ states that whatever we ask for, we shall receive.

Christ sees us as having courage, honesty, fortitude, joy, love, health, and prosperity. Christ saw mankind as equipped to receive anything!! All you have to do is ask and believe and have faith! Humans are supposed to be successful!!

I believe that God wants us to live at our greatest potential, to live successfully in God’s kingdom. A kingdom of love, joy, and serenity. A kingdom of spiritual abundance and material support. Our success must include love, joy, and serenity.

In 1952, Norman Vincent Peale published The Power of Positive Thinking and set the world on its ear!

This book is probably the most important work in the entire area of human potential, self-help programs. Peale drew on his religious background and developed the idea that if you think positively and have Faith, that you can do anything! Peale quotes business people, political leaders, and the Bible, all giving credence to the power of positive thinking. He clearly shows that our achievements and happiness in life are directly related to our overall mental attitudes.

Norman Vincent Peale in “The Power of Positive Thinking” advances the idea that all the elements we need for successful living are already in our mind. Ideas are currently in our minds when brought forward and mixed with planning and implementation can lead us to success in almost any undertaking. Peale goes on to say that the New Testament phrase “The Kingdom of God is within you.” Means that our creator has given us all the abilities, resources, knowledge we need to live constructively. All we need to do is recognize and use these powers.

Napoleon Hill wrote Think and Grow Rich, and it’s obvious that he believes in the power of the mind and its importance in reaching financial success. Hill notes that everything starts as a thought in our minds; change the thoughts in our minds and the results will change! He stresses the use of positive thoughts and visualizations along with a persistent effort as the way to success.

Napoleon Hill, in a chapter on overcoming fears, states that man has absolute control over his own thoughts. Second, we must recognize that everything man does starts as a thought. Combining these two ideas, Hill asserts, leads us to a method of overcoming our fears. The fact that we control our thoughts, and that everything starts as a thought, is very powerful tool for success.

In 1960, Maxwell Maltz M.D. published Psycho-

Cybernetics in which he discusses the natural goal-striving mechanism that is part of all of us. He expands Peale's thoughts to include not only positive thinking, but positive self-image as well. Maltz goes into tremendous detail about how our success mechanism can be developed and used.

Dr. Maltz believes that self-image is the basis of people's personality and behavior. Changing the self-image will lead to changes in our personalities and behaviors. Additionally, Maltz comments that our self-image will define the limits of what we can and can't do, what we can or can't achieve. Obviously. If we change the self-image the limits change! The key is to develop a realistic self-image that will greatly expand our limits, our capabilities, and lead us to success.

All these authors, and hundreds of others, talk about the natural, inborn, God given if you will, power to be successful! Their systems do not use supernatural or even superhuman traits or skills. These systems deal with the common elements of everyone's life! Success is a natural, inborn part of everyone's life!

Dr. Maltz supports this view with his comments that within us we have all the abilities and power we need to live a happy and successful life. Maltz states we already the power to do things we never dreamed possible. We tap this power when we change our beliefs away from the limiting ideas of, "I can't", "I'm not worthy", etc. to more positive beliefs.

I will talk about success in detail in the chapter on goals, but I want to give you the definition of success as it applies to Positive Direction. Success is the striving towards worthy goals, goals that nurture physical, mental, and spiritual growth in myself and others. Success is the

maximizing of my God given potentials and preparing myself to receive the gift of a fulfilled, happy, and purposeful life. Success is the integration of our physical, mental, and spiritual natures directed to the achievement of worthy goals through loving means. Success is the optimum positive use of our mind, body and spirit for the greatest good of myself and others.

Success is a team effort: you, me, and God. Success requires effort from all three of us and must benefit all three of us. Success by its very nature is not a solo performance. I have all I need within me to be successful, but I still need your help and God's help.

Success is not static! Success is not a thing to get. Success is a process, and any movement toward our goals is a success! Success is the process of living a fulfilled, happy and purposeful life. Think about that! You don't win the Gold Medal at the Olympics (success) without a ton of practice (process). Have you ever been to a huge multi-million dollar corporation and seen a dollar bill framed on the wall? That dollar is their first, a symbol of the start of a process that led them to their current success. Want to be a millionaire? Start by saving one dollar. The highest mountain in the world is climbed one step at a time. A successful life is a continuous process. Success requires constant effort and really becomes a way of life. Success is a lifelong process! Success is a way of living!

Success is the maximizing of our God given natural talents and using those talents for the good of ourselves and others. We are not all superstars, but very few of us are using our full potential either! Success means maximizing whatever potential we have and applying that potential in a way that promotes growth and the well being of everyone. Simply, success is doing good deeds as well as we can!

Success then must involve the pursuit of worthy virtuous goals! One cannot include greed, anger, envy, false pride, lust, gluttony, or sloth in any pursuit of real success. You may recognize these traits as the Seven Deadly Sins, and they are deadly!

Success must also include the growth and development of our spiritual, physical and mental natures. I believe that humans are spiritual, physical and mental creatures and that success must include all three areas, not just one or two at the expense of the others. This point is critical!

Finally, success in my view is more internal than external. Success must include health, serenity, peace of mind, an absence of fear, an inner sense of security, happiness, and love. Without these we are not successful! We may accomplish great things, enjoy material wealth, but if we don't have peace of mind and love, we are not truly successful. Success is not only the what and how of life, but the why of life as well. I can have goals and plans that give my life direction, but to be truly successful these goals and plans must also give my life meaning. Success must address the why of life leading us toward love, peace of mind, strength, and wisdom.

If you feel that your life is less than successful, I am about to show you how to change the dominant thoughts in your mind, define your goals, and start down the road to true success!

I've just shown you the tip of an iceberg! If you still have any doubts about the inherent quality of successful living then read any, or preferably all, of the books listed as suggested readings in the introduction. A belief in success must become a part of our mental attitude before we can become successful!!

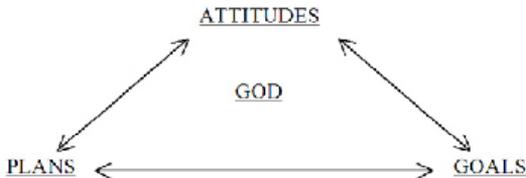


## OVERVIEW and PREPARATION - CHAPTER 2

### A ROAD MAP and GROUND RULES

The Positive Direction System is so simple and obvious, it's not surprising that we constantly look for more complex solutions to our problems. Right now we are pursuing a set of goals by some plan, and we have dominant attitudes and a self-image that shape all of our behaviors. Our goals probably aren't well defined or they may even be someone else's goals. Because our goals are not well defined, our plans and actions are probably haphazard, and may even be counter-productive. And finally, our attitudes and self-image could be preventing us from putting forth our best efforts, achieving our goals, and living successfully. Our spirituality, our relationship with our God, may be weak or non-existent. The Positive Direction System addresses all of these issues. Additionally, Positive Direction will help us understand the physical, mental, and spiritual components of our human nature and how all these aspects must be included in our definition of success. Also, I will talk about how a good, loving God is at the center of the entire system.

The diagram below will help you "see" the system and show the inter-relationships of the four main components.



It's that simple! Notice I didn't say easy. It's simple.

Now here is the overview: 1) I must have a positive self-image, spiritual growth, and positive attitudes, 2) I must know what my real worthy goals are, 3) I must have concrete “doable” plans to achieve those goals, and 4) God must be at the center of my life. The Positive Direction System will help us do these four things.

Here is the system one more time: 1) Attitudes, 2) Goals, 3) Plans, 4) God. Simple!

There is a reason for the order of appearance. Our attitudes are a critical element in the formula, and the area that requires the most effort. Goals and plans are somewhat simpler and more mechanical in nature, but they involve the actual work of achieving a successful life. And, most importantly, God must always be at the center of our lives.

There is no magic here. No, we can't go to bed and wake up rich, beautiful, healthy, etc. This program is hard work! It requires dedication! But remember, it's our life!! We have all the tools and abilities we need to live successfully—we just have to use them!

Before we start the actual program, there is some preparation that needs to be done. Adopting the strategies and behavior patterns listed below will prepare us for the Positive Direction System and foster a more healthy life while priming us for success.

Again, attitudes are the key to this program. You must have a positive self-image and an optimistic view of the world. This topic is the subject of a later chapter, but I want to get you started right now!! These ideas are seeds to plant in our lives that will help us grow.

FIND SOMETHING POSITIVE IN EVERYTHING!! Think positively about everything! Seek

out and find the positive everywhere! Never, never, ever think a negative thought! This step alone separates the wheat from chaff. This is hard, but you can do it! Start practicing now!

Ralph Waldo Emerson said, “The measure of mental health is the disposition to find good everywhere.”

Start small; start by eliminating the negatives. Remember Thumper, the little rabbit in the Disney movie, *Bambi*? He said, “If you can’t say something good about somebody, then don’t say anything!” Smart rabbit!! I’ll expand on this and say, “If I can’t think something positive about someone or something, then don’t think anything!” Be neutral, hold no thoughts, or best of all, think something positive! Look on the bright side! Find that good in everybody! Fly into that silver lining in that dark cloud! Always hope for the best!

Later, whenever a negative thought pops into our head, replace it with a positive thought. Examples: “I feel like crap, and this is going to be a rough day.” Replace that with, “I feel fine and I will meet today’s challenges with success!” How about, “I’ll never get this stuff done!” Try “I will work hard and complete my tasks.” The classic, “I can’t do that!” If you ever hear yourself say that, quickly say, “I can do anything!!”

While we are finding positives in the world and people around us, do the same for ourselves. Never make a negative comment about ourselves to anyone. More importantly, never make a negative comment about ourselves to ourselves! Always think of ourselves in a positive way; start by eliminating the negatives and replacing those thoughts with positive feelings about ourselves. A positive self-image is critical for success.

The second key attitude trait we need is, THINK

OUTWARD! What can I do for others? How can I improve the World in some small way? How can I help someone? Buddha said, “A smile you give out will come back to you.” Christ said, “It is better to give than to receive.” Reach out, and someone will reach out to you.

We are way too self-centered and selfish today. We are not on Earth alone. Take care of the World and its people, and the World will take care of us. Remember success is a team effort.

Dr. Maltz, while talking about the traits of a success type personality, makes many comments about charity. He states that successful people have an interest in other people and have regard for them. They respect others’ problems and needs. They understand human dignity and treat others as humans, not as things to be used for personal gain. They see everyone as unique, with dignity and deserving respect. They see everyone as a Child of God. Maltz further points out that how we feel about others is often how we feel about ourselves. When we more charitable to others, we will feel more charitable to ourselves.

“It is a psychological fact that our feelings about ourselves tend to correspond to our feelings about other people. When a person begins to feel more charitably about others, he invariably begins to feel more charitably toward himself.”

In your social and business contacts, always be a benefit to the other person. Try to contribute something, improve them, encourage them, do a better job for them, or at least smile and say hello. Thinking outward is making all your social contacts opportunities to help and support the other person. Remember that success is striving toward worthy goals that nurture physical, mental, and spiritual growth in ourselves and others.

The next attitude is, THINK IN TERMS OF RIGHT NOW! Question: can we go back into the past and change something, re-do it, correct mistakes? If you can, I want you as a business partner! Let's face it—nobody is perfect. Everyone makes mistakes. Personally, I couldn't count my big mistakes, let alone all of the smaller errors. But try as I may, I can't go back and change anything, and neither can you! What we can do is learn from our experiences, both good and bad, and apply that information to our plans and actions. Our past experience can suggest the best possible action to take right now. My best tomorrow is created by doing my best today. Only focus on what we can control! We can't control the past. We can control the present. Don't dwell in the past; plan for the future and work hard now!!

Here is a quick review of our key attitudes so far:

1) Always be positive! 2) Direct yourself outward to other people and projects, and 3) Look toward and plan for the future but focus on goal-directed action now. POSITIVE, OUTWARD, NOW.

In addition to the traits listed above, there are other characteristics and attitudes that I believe we need to be successful. One of these is COMMITMENT! Commitment seems to be in short supply these days, but we must have it to be successful.

Check this out: "For better or worse, richer or poorer, in sickness and in health." This of course is part of the marriage vows, but it is really talking about commitment. Commitment to a person no matter what happens! Commitment forever! "'Til death do us part!" Think about that! Think what would happen if we committed ourselves to achieving a successful life at the same level!

If we are going to be successful, we must be committed to being successful all the time, good days and bad, during setbacks and misfortune, ALL THE TIME!

If we are not committed to changing our lives and improving ourselves now, forget reading the rest of this book! This program won't work if we won't work! If we are committed, we will work.

Related to commitment is INTENSITY. In fact, intensity is often an expression of commitment. Intensity is the focusing of your commitment into effort. It is like using a magnifying glass to start a fire by focusing the sun's rays. INTENSITY IS PUTTING COMMITMENT INTO ACTION!!

Intensity is another trait that seems to have vanished from the scene. I see people, sometimes top professionals, going through their days in a zombie-like state. They drag along looking like they don't know what they are doing and don't care. I think sometimes they would just as soon go home and go to bed.

One on one, the person who is intense, the person who is putting effort behind commitment, will beat the "sleep-walker" who may even have superior abilities! Intensity, desire, and commitment are traits of every winner and every successful person in this world.

Intensity is required not only in the way we work towards our goals, but in all parts of our personality. We must have intense faith, the belief in ourselves, a belief in the future, and a belief in God. Develop an intense self-confidence and a belief that we influence our future by doing the right things today.

Intensity does not mean that we run around like a mad man to achieve our goals. Intensity means setting our goals, making our plans, and going for it, then keep going

for it until we get it! This reflects serious commitment and belief.

Another trait we need to be successful is RESPONSIBILITY. Today people hide behind legal rulings, corporate bureaucracies, past problems and situations, and so on. It amazes me that major events happen in this world and no one is responsible!

I believe I am responsible for myself, my actions, and my attitudes. Once I recognize these responsibilities, I can change my attitudes and actions to maximize my potential and to shape my future. In this way I am responsible to my future by living at my current highest potential, right now. Remember that success is largely an act of living to my maximum potential and to good purpose today.

Being responsible for ourselves and our future means that success or failure will be the result of actions taken now and in the future. Past mistakes and situations cannot be changed. Be concerned with what we can control; we control our actions now. This means that the past is no longer an excuse for where we are not going today! We may owe someone an apology, a few dollars, or some jail time for past actions, but today is ours! Live and learn, learn to live!

The Bible states, "...but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God and Jesus."

HONESTY is yet another characteristic we need to develop, especially in dealing with ourselves. Positive Direction is really a kind of an ethics program, so I'll simply say that lying, at best, is a short-term solution with an extremely high price to be paid later on. However, in terms

of this program, we must make personal assessments, take actions, and evaluate results, all on our own. This must be done with a realistic and honest view of ourselves. We can't lie to ourselves; it will establish a very bad habit and slow, or stop, any progress.

Honesty is not an opportunity to build an inventory of reasons not to meet our objectives in life. Honesty is needed to determine our starting point and evaluate later progress.

Be warned that dishonesty can take many forms such as denial, justification, and rationalization. However, the facts are facts, and the sooner we get to the truth and stay there, the better.

Always remember, within this program and in all of our life, honesty is the best policy. Period. A habit of lying will destroy us.

Bobby McFarin said in his hit song, "Don't worry, be happy!" I love it!! Fantastic! We need to cultivate JOY and HAPPINESS in our daily lives!! I've told you to seek the positives. We must enjoy life. Smile. Later we'll be in a position to know that we are working toward our life's goals; make it a point to feel good about that. Be nice to other people. Say positive things about people and situations. Plan for our future and work toward our goals. "Don't worry, be happy."

Christ said in addressing his disciples in Luke 12:25, "And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life. If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest?" The fact is you cannot add one second to your life through worry and anxiety. So if it can't add to your life, why worry and be anxious? In fact, the worry and anxiety will probably do more damage than the "worried-about

problems” themselves. Our energies are far better spent in finding our goals and working towards them. Always find joy and happiness in our lives!!

Dr. Maltz points out, in both Judaism and Christianity, being joyful, thankful, and cheerful are the WAYS and MEANS to living a good and righteous life, not the results.

Since spirituality and our relationship with God is at the center of this system, Daily Prayer must become part of our lives. Pray at least twice a day. If you don't believe in the power of prayer, try it twice a day for 90 continuous days. Don't just read a prayer from a book; make this a time of personal conversation with God.

Finally, we must cultivate LOVE in our lives. This is not physical love or sex, or even a love towards our families and friends. This love is based in our giving our best to everyone, including people we don't like, even our worst enemies! This love commits us to giving our understanding, support, and forgiveness to everyone while expecting nothing in return. This love is a pure, open, helpful giving. John Powell and others have called this unconditional love, a love that gives with no expectation of any return or personal gain. Think of the beauty that will fill our lives when we give ourselves to love so that we may give that love to others.

While we are developing these positive characteristics, we might want to eliminate the following negative traits from our inventory: false pride, anger, lust, gluttony, greed, envy, and laziness. I will talk more about these behaviors later on.

Positive self-image and positive attitudes are critical to our success! Plan to work hard in this area! Don't worry if progress is slow. Later I will help you with specific

things to do that will support our efforts. But, get started right now!!

A quick review of things to work on. Again, don't worry about slow progress; we are not perfect... yet!!

1) Develop attitudes that are positive, directed outward from ourselves toward helping others, and oriented to goal-directed action.

2) Be committed, be intense. Go after what we want, work hard, and stay with it.

3) Take responsibility for our life and its future.

4) Be honest with ourselves and others.

5) Enjoy life, be happy and positive.

6) Pray at least twice a day.

7) Live a life, a life filled with love.

## A PERSONAL INVENTORY - CHAPTER 3

### THE BEGINNING

The start of the Positive Direction System requires that we first find out where we are, a personal inventory. We can think of this program as a trip, an adventure really, and what we are going to do now is find our starting point.

I believe that this step is very important for another critical reason. Once this process is completed, we will have all of our current assets in front of us. Now our self-esteem, our knowledge of self worth, and our strength, will all improve. This activity will prove to us that we already have many of the assets and abilities we need to take control of our life. We may realize the fact that we already have the power to change our life with what God has already given us.

Our individual inventory will be broken down into 3 parts: 1) PERSONAL, 2) IMMEDIATE SUPPORT, and 3) AVAILABLE POTENTIALS.

This Personal Inventory will start with a look at us as individuals. In the back of the book there are a set of blank worksheets to use in this exercise. Write down every positive thing, every strength, every skill, every attribute, and every positive character trait that has increased our knowledge. Limit this list to us alone, our personal assets. Start with only positive elements.

Next, while focusing on our assets, we must also identify any problem areas that may exist. These areas may need improvement or a complete change. We must be as honest as we can about our personal challenges. We will

talk about this area again in greater detail in Chapter 5.

The personal inventory must also look at the three components of our human nature: the physical, mental, and spiritual. This section of the inventory will show us our strengths and weaknesses in these critical areas.

Physically we must look at our lifestyles and habits around diet, stress, exercise, rest, and relaxation. We can't be successful if we are sick and tired! Also, drugs and alcohol can destroy our abilities to see reality, make decisions, and accomplish any tasks. Drugs and alcohol, in my experience, also block all spiritual energies. On the positive side, physically we can note our general health, physical skills, and special capacities, good diet, and healthy lifestyles.

Mentally we must check ourselves for conflicts, unresolved past issues, stress, depression, anxiety, or any form of mental illness. This area may require professional evaluation and treatment. Mentally, on the plus side, we should recognize our intelligence, our ability to reason, our creative powers, and any special mental capacities that we have.

Spiritual inventories are a little tricky. Belief and faith mean a lot of different things to different people. What I need is a working relationship with a Higher Order or God. I need a sense of communication, trust, and support. For me this came about through the practice of prayer and experiencing the results of prayer in my life. One test I use for my spiritual condition is this question: How much love is in my life and how much love is coming out of my life? Do I have serenity, peace of mind, and joy? If I have spirituality, an active connection to God, I will have love, serenity, and joy regardless of what happens in my life. We must "measure" our spiritual lives by looking

at the love in our lives and the presence of a belief and a faith in the power of God in our everyday life. A strong spiritual base is a tremendous and necessary asset in living a successful life.

A second “measure” of spirituality is how much fear is present in our lives. If our lives are filled with fear, insecurity, worry, and anxiety, we probably do not have much spirituality. A belief in God will give us a life of serenity, joy, and a sense of security and well being. Serenity may indicate a connection with God and a faith in God. Anxiety may indicate a need for spiritual development.

This exercise of our personal inventories will demonstrate how many positives are already present in us as people. This list is the starting point, the building blocks, and the foundation of our future. Spend as much time on this as we need before moving on to the next section.

The second inventory list is the positives “outside” us, our Immediate Support. This list will include positives such as friends, family, church, community groups, service organizations, or a self-help group that may be helping us deal with a personal problem like drugs or alcohol. This list covers two areas: people that can support us and opportunities for us to help others. This list is the cast of “supporting characters” that will help us be more successful. We may ask, “How will helping someone else help me?” I can’t answer that question, but believe me—somehow it works! This receiving through giving is indeed a wonderful mystery.

I firmly believe that humans cannot live successfully without help. We need help and support; we are built that way. No one can be successful solely on their

own efforts. We all need teachers, sources of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding beyond ourselves. We need support, comfort, and security from fellow travelers on this journey. We need to help and support others as well. Developing this supporting cast is very important.

I also firmly believe that our support system must include a relationship with a Higher Order, Higher Power, or God, whatever works for us. This relationship empowers us with peace of mind, wisdom, and strength that cannot be had through any other source. For me, simple prayer and spiritual reading opened this relationship.

Finally, the third part of this list is for elements available to us that we are not currently taking advantage of or skills that we haven't fully developed yet. These are our Available Potentials. This list "zigzags" with the first two. This list will include any personal development, or specific skills that we can acquire. Let me help you with some examples. We want to become better communicators so taking a Dale Carnegie course or reading his books will develop these skills. We need knowledge of computers or even just to learn to type. Local high schools and colleges offer low-cost programs that will teach us these skills. We need an improved self-image, better overall attitudes, and some direction in our lives—plug ourselves into the Positive Direction System. We may need help in overcoming a drug or alcohol problem—if so, simply call A.A. or any support group. In summary, this list will cover all possible supporting elements and skill development needed to improve our life that we haven't used yet. This may include "cures" for some of our problems as well as adding new skills that will enable us to achieve our goals.

Now let's take a look at these lists: our personal advantages, the positives in our immediate surroundings,

and the additional things available to us. Immediately we will see the amazing array of positive components that can be used to make us successful. The reality of our situation, when we look at all the positives, is that we have a tremendous number of assets and abilities to meet and overcome life's challenges.

Again, go back over each list. First, our personal strengths, skills, attributes, character traits, experiences, etc. Next, look at the external support available from family, friends, church, etc. Finally, review all the opportunities available to us that we have not used yet.

Keep this list handy and refer back to it often. It will help us through the low spots and remind us that we are not alone in our quest for success.

We must also note the areas that need improvement and try to take action to cure some of these problem areas. However, put the primary focus on all the positives we have and develop these more fully.

A little side note for those among us who are dealing with an adversity like substance abuse, a handicap, or a disadvantaged background: The strongest steel is made by heating it red hot and bashing it with a hammer!! Adversity builds strength and character. It is said in gyms everywhere, "No pain, no gain." It is often at the lowest point in our lives that we start our greatest periods of growth. When we find ourselves suffering, in pain, and feeling helpless, we are motivated to change and to reach out for help from our fellow humans and from God. Pain can be a great starting point for change and growth. If we can overcome a drug addiction, a handicap, and bad past experiences, we will have developed the strengths, the perseverance, and the skills to overcome any obstacle! A person who stutters becomes a great speaker. A withdrawn

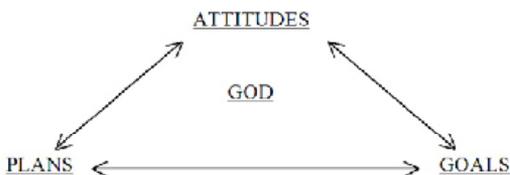
and shy person becomes a great entertainer. Psychologists call this overcompensation. I believe these people have identified a problem area, developed skills to overcome it, and continued with those skills to a level of greatness! Tempered steel. The steel tempered with a hammer. The strongest of the bunch!! And don't forget our experience in overcoming our adversities can be used to help others overcome theirs.

The next four chapters will cover the three main parts of the Positive Direction System in detail.

# POSITIVE DIRECTION SYSTEM – GOALS – CHAPTER 4

## THE DESTINATION

Let's take a quick overview of the complete Positive Direction System to give continuity to the next three chapters. The diagram below shows the interrelationships of the four main elements of the system. Note that God— or good or love—is at the center of all the other elements and influences all of them.



Notice the arrows go in both directions. In practice, all four components work at the same time, with attitudes being the most critical. However, first we will establish our goals.

Setting goals is an absolutely essential part of the Positive Direction System. This exercise will establish the true “end results” we want from our lives.

When we look at our goals, we must look at what success really means to us. What are we really looking for at our deepest levels? Unless we fulfill our most basic needs, our fundamental goals, no amount of “success” will make us truly happy.

I believe that when I look at my innermost being, I find success including health, happiness, peace of mind,

serenity, a sense of belonging, and the ability to give and receive love. Notice that these things are internal, emotional, and psychological rather than external and material. Possibly one of the greatest problems in our world today is that we look to external “things” to create an internal state of happiness and fulfillment. I believe that to be truly successful, I must take care of my internal state, regardless of how much—or how little—external material success I achieve.

Looking at my own life, one crucial internal issue I never looked at was my relationship with God or a higher order of any kind. Remember we are a physical, mental (emotional), and spiritual creation. Success must include the development of all three of these areas. We must take care of ourselves physically, cure any mental problems, establish new attitudes and outlooks, plus develop our spiritual life. Victor Frankl states in his book Man’s Search for Meaning that the principle human drive is for God. Gerald May in Addiction and Grace further adds, “After twenty years of listening to the yearnings of people’s hearts, I am convinced that all human beings have an inborn desire for God. Whether we are consciously religious or not, this desire is our deepest longing...”. When asked what the greatest commandment was, Jesus replied, “To love God first with all your heart, soul, and mind. And related to the first, to love thy neighbor as thyself.” The primary goal of humans may be to experience the presence of God. Success may be as simple as living with and acting with the love of God.

All of this points to the fact that placing God first as we look at our goals may be critical for true success. Placing the love of God first accomplishes two things: first, it anchors our life to a permanent and everlasting source of

strength, wisdom, and serenity that supports and empowers us through all the activities and adversities of life. Second, it provides a framework, a fundamental concept that we can use to develop and evaluate our life's goals and plans. Goals give our life direction, so goals should express the meaning and purpose of our lives. I firmly believe that the ultimate purpose of all of us is best expressed in "Love God first with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbor as yourself."

Spiritual development is critical for success! Try working in this area, and you will be amazed at the results. We should get on our knees at least twice a day and talk to God. Have a conversation with God, ask questions and listen for answers in our minds, our emotions, intuitions, other people, and events. Also, regularly read the Bible and other spiritual writings. These actions, and many others, will increase the awareness of God's constant and loving presence. This is all very practical stuff of living a successful life.

Let's again look at our definition of success. Success is the striving towards worthy goals that nurture physical, mental, and spiritual growth in myself and others. Success is the maximizing of my God given potentials and preparing myself to receive the gift of a happy, fulfilled, and purposeful life. Success is the integration of my physical, mental, and spiritual natures directed to the achievement of worthy goals through loving means. Success is the optimum positive use of my mind, body, and spirit for the greatest good for myself and others.

Keep this definition in mind as we work through the process of setting our goals.

Notice that success involves the striving toward worthy goals. Striving for unworthy goals is a deadly,

empty pursuit for us and others. Worthy goals are life-giving and fulfilling to all. Again, we find ourselves facing another problem in today's world. Our culture spends little or no time considering the true value of what we consider as success and even more rarely looks at success while putting the love of God and our neighbor first!

One test I use to determine the worthiness of my goals is what I call the Seven Deadly Sins Filter Test. If my goal will honestly pass through this filter, I'm a little surer that this goal is worthy. Honesty is the key here. I must be very careful of my old friends, self-justification, rationalization, denial, hiding bad motives behind good ones, and so on. This activity is really soul-searching for my true and deepest motives for wanting a particular goal.

What are the Seven Deadly Sins? Pride, anger, greed, envy, sloth, lust, and gluttony. Let's define each of these terms. Pride is an overblown belief in one's own excellence that can lead to conceit, arrogance, and a feeling of superiority. Anger is an extreme hostility towards others ranging from indignation to rage. Greed is a focusing on a desire for worldly possessions beyond what one needs. Envy is a discontent and resentment of possessions or qualities of others or a sadness at the success of others. Sloth is laziness, sluggishness, and a lack of spiritual growth. Lust is an excessive pursuit of sex or any overwhelming desire or craving. Finally, Gluttony is over-eating, over-drinking, or the over-consumption of anything. It's easy to see how all these behaviors run counter to a truly successful life.

We all need a little of each of these traits to live. In fact, they may be natural instincts and part of all of us. However, the extreme presence of any of these is indeed deadly! Unfortunately, we don't have to look very far to

see these sins being bought, sold, and promoted as the values and true goals of life. These sins are truly unworthy goals and are totally incapable of providing any lasting and deep sense of happiness and fulfillment. In fact, these sins only provide very temporary relief and lead us to lives of fear, loneliness, and despair. I know; I've been there.

The next test for our goals is the Great Commandment Test, "Love God first with all your heart, soul, and mind, and love your neighbors as yourself." Following these simple directions leads me to a powerful, yet serene and loving life. Anything of lasting value, any goal, must follow the Great Commandment. Notice that love appears three times in this one sentence: once for God, once for others, and once for ourselves.

Look again at our definition of success. Do my goals fit this definition?

You may be saying, "How can I set any realistic goals with all these rules and restrictions?" Believe me, using the Great Commandment of "loving God first with all my heart, soul and mind, and loving my neighbor as myself" and using the Seven Deadly Sins test will lead us to true goals that are worth achieving. These goals may not measure up to society's ideas of success, however these goals will bring great and lasting happiness to you and others.

Always remember, we are not our goals. Goals are related to our view of success, but recall that success is a process of living, not an end result. Our lives are not only measured by achievement, but also by the quality of our existence. Goals give our lives direction, purpose, and meaning and provide measuring points of our progress. However, our goals are not the total meaning of life. As humans, our primary job is to nurture and to promote

successful living in ourselves and others in any way we can, no matter how small or insignificant our acts may seem. We don't have to do great things, just good things!

Don't skip this section! Don't assume we really know what we want from life. If we are like most people, we've probably given little, if any, thought to what is really important to us. In setting our goals, we give our life purpose and direction. Once we know where we want to go, we can make plans and start actions to get us there.

Dr. Maltz points out that we are naturally a goal-seeking machine. Without our own meaningful, personal goals that interest us, we will feel lost, without purpose, lacking direction. We are designed to overcome our environment, solve problems, and achieve goals. In fact, Maltz believes that satisfaction and happiness in life come from conquering our problems and achieving our goals. A person's view of their life as being worthwhile is directly connected to having personal goals that they see as worthwhile.

I'll give credit for the next part of the Positive Direction System to Alan Lakein's How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life. How about that for a title! This is a great book on goal setting and time management, and I highly recommend you read it.

Ok, here we go! In the back of the book you will find four pages with, 3 Months, 1 Year, 5 Years, and Lifetime labeled at the top.

In writing out our goals, don't let "reality" play a significant role. In fact, let our imaginations run wild! If we want to race in the Indy 500, write it down! Write down anything! Star in a Broadway play, learn to fly, become President—write it all down! Do not tolerate being the person who never took a shot at that crazy dream in your

life. To live our life successfully, we must live for the things that are really the most important to us! There is no such thing as a “can’t do” goal! So, if a goal pops into our head, write it down. Whatever we do, do not wimp out on our goals; after all, it’s our life!

First, take the sheet of paper with “3 Months” written on the top. Write down what we want to achieve in the next three months. ANYTHING we want to achieve!! This list could include painting the porch or starting college at age 60. Write down where we want to be, what we want to do, what we want to be like, and who we want to be with.

Once we have finished the 3 Month goal sheet, do the same on our 1 Year sheet. Same process applies here; write down anything and everything!!

With our 1 Year sheet completed, repeat this process on the 5 Year sheet. Obviously, we are moving our time frames further into the future, but the process is the same. Write down anything we want to achieve in the next 5 years.

Finally, do the same process on our Lifetime goal sheet. Here write down any goal, achievement, anything we want to do before life ends.

Once these four lists are completed, go back and add anything we may have overlooked. Don’t delete anything!!

Some very interesting things may emerge in this process. We may realize that there are some key goals in our life that we haven’t been paying much attention to. We may find that some of our behavior is actually working totally against our goals. We may “discover” a goal that we never knew we had! Don’t be surprised or embarrassed by the discovery that we haven’t been doing much about what

is really important to us; this is very, very common.

Review these goals again and remember our definition of success. Are these goals supportive of the physical, mental, and spiritual growth of myself and others? Do these goals address my deepest internal needs and desires? Do these goals pass the Seven Deadly Sins test? Do these goals pass the Great Commandment test? Am I keeping God first as I look at my goals?

Back to our lists. Go to the 3 Months list and pick the top three goals from that list. DON'T pick the easy ones, or the ones we know we can do. Pick the goals that are the most important to us!! Don't play around here!! Ladies and gentlemen, it's show time!!! we are trying to determine what's really important in our life! What it is that we really want to do with our future! Don't sell yourself short! Go for the gold!!

Once we have picked the top three goals on our 3 Month list, do the same for our 1 Year, 5 Year, and Lifetime goal sheets.

Next, take another sheet of paper and write down these top three goals from each of the time frames. We will have a total of 12 goals on this list. With a little luck we will see a pattern or continuity between a few of our goals. For example, a 3 Month goal of hitting a sales quota will tie into a lifetime goal of financial independence.

The next step is the selection, from this master list of twelve goals, the Three Most Important Goals overall. Again, pick the top, most important, three goals.

Again perform a final check of these three goals using the Seven Deadly Sins filter test and the Greatest Commandment test. Are these goals based in pride, greed, envy, lust, gluttony, sloth, or anger? Do these goals promote our loving God first and loving our neighbors as

ourselves? Also, check these goals against our definition of success, particularly checking that these goals nurture the physical, mental, and spiritual growth in ourselves and others.

What we have just done is identify the three most important goals in our life as we see them today! Now think about this: if we could achieve those three goals, would our life be a success? Would we and others enjoy life more? Would things be better for us? Would we be happier? I hope we are answering YES to all of these.

Notice I said these are our goals as we see them today. These goals are not cast in stone! In fact, a periodic review of our goals is necessary, probably every three months or so. As our life changes and events happen, our goals will change. A birth, a death, an accident, winning the lottery—a number of things can reorder our priorities and our goals. Even achieving a goal can lead to new and larger goals. Or we may decide that the price is too high for a given goal. So review this list and be flexible. Flexible, not wimpy!!

A few days from now, we should re-read this chapter and redo this exercise. In fact, doing this exercise a few times won't hurt. This will help to expand and clarify the real goals of our life.

Keep these goals handy and read them at least once a day. This will ensure that these goals do not slip from our view and attention. Always keep our eye on the ball!!

As we look at our goals, we must always remember that success is the maximizing of our God given potentials to prepare ourselves to receive the gift of a happy, fulfilled, purposeful life.



## POSITIVE DIRECTION SYSTEM – PLANNING – CHAPTER 5

### THE PATH

Now that we have clarified our goals, we must develop ways to achieve those goals. This chapter will develop our “things to do” list. Let me stress right now that this planning stage must lead to action!

Norman Vincent Peale states that in solving personal problems two facts must be understood: First, the power to solve these problems is already inherently within us; second, we need to develop and implement a plan. Peale believes that without a spiritual and emotional plan we will not overcome our personal problems.

Again, we must consider our definition of success even as we develop plans to achieve our goals. Remember, success is the striving toward worthy goals that nurture physical, mental, and spiritual growth in ourselves and others. Don't forget the Seven Deadly Sins Filter. We must avoid pride, anger, lust, envy, sloth, gluttony, and greed. Also here is the Greatest Commandment Filter: Love God first with all your heart, mind and soul, and love your neighbor as yourself and as God loves us. Our plans and actions must be developed within these boundaries. A person could achieve financial independence by robbing people, but would not be successful in terms of this program! Morality and ethics must play a role in our plans and resulting activities. I cannot grow at your expense. Success means growth for all of us, and we must ensure that our plans follow this belief.

All right, it's pen and paper time again. In the back of the book you will find worksheets for this exercise. Write one goal on the top of each sheet. Under each goal, write all possible activities that will accomplish that goal. Again, write down all possible things that we could do to move us towards our goal. Let our imaginations run wild! Experts call this process brainstorming, and it's amazing how productive it can be. Some of these ideas may be dropped later, but we may produce an idea that will set the world on its ear!

Try to develop ten items for each of our goals. This will give us many options, all of which will move us toward our goal.

Also, don't be shy and bashful about writing down all possible plans. Most activities will either move us forward toward our goals or leave us where we are now! Rarely will a goal-directed behavior ever take us away from a goal.

Another source of information and ideas to be used in planning is prayer. Yes, prayer! Praying can open our minds and hearts to God, and provide amazing guidance and support in the planning process. The idea that our relationship with God does not have practical applications in our daily lives is simply not true. If we ask God for help in achieving worthy goals, we will get help. Remember that prayer is a conversation; we talk, then we listen with a quiet mind. With prayer, ideas and opportunities will appear that move us toward success, the positive growth of ourselves and our fellows.

Below are a few additional tips and tactics to help us in the planning process.

A key tactic in achieving a large goal is to break it down into smaller "sub-goals". Generally, the three goals

that people select are substantial and difficult to accomplish if taken as an “all or nothing” proposition. But, remember what I said. Success is the process of striving toward ultimately worthy goals. When achieving our life’s top goals, we will attack the tasks by taking on bite-size pieces and taking small steps.

We may find these small steps by looking at the shorter timeframe goals, the 3 Month and 1 Year sheets, for possible sub-goals and activities that will move us toward our larger goal. And never forget that the highest mountain is climbed one step at a time.

A second key tactic to achieve our goals is determine what we can do RIGHT NOW! Don’t put all of our plans in the distant future. We want activity to start as soon as possible and to keep going. Working towards our goals is the only way to get there!! Yes, we want to plan future activity, but the question should always be “What can I do RIGHT NOW?” This great idea comes directly from Alan Lakein and is something that we should never forget. I guarantee that if we are always doing something (right now) to move us towards our goals, we will achieve those goals with amazing speed!

Napoleon Hill in talking about procrastination, points out that the time is never just right. Don’t hesitate. We must start now, where we are, with the tools at hand. More and better tools will be found as we move forward

Here’s another great tip to help manage our goal-directed activities—I got it from a story about a very busy business executive who had a “Things to Do” list that was enormous. On this person’s desk was a curious reminder to help him cope with the workload. It was an hourglass! This person used this ancient device to remind himself to do one thing at a time, just as the grains of sand drop

through the hourglass one at a time. This is a great lesson. When we are working toward our goals, or even doing our day-to-day work, do one thing at a time! Focus on it, put all our attention and energies into it, do our best, and then go on to the next task and do the same for it.

I love another analogy I heard somewhere that compares a human to a calculator. If we don't clear the calculator between problems, the results are a jumbled, meaningless mess. The same applies to us; do two things at once and we may end up with a mess. Do one thing at a time, clear our machine, and go on to the next task.

If we have set our priorities and are doing the best possible things right now to move us towards our goals, we won't have to worry about all the things we're not doing anyway!! And always do one thing at a time.

I want to make a point about goals, plans and work. Will we always be striving to hit our goals, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year? No. You must take some time and go to the beach now and then. In fact, we should plan to relax just as we plan to work. Take time to "smell the roses" and have fun. You will also find that working towards our life's goals won't be as tedious and difficult as normal day-to-day labor. Many would say that it is not work at all! Now don't skip the rest of this program and go to the beach! It's not that easy! We must be committed to work toward our own success!! We must take action!!

Hill makes a great point by comparing life to a checkers game with time as our opposing player. If we don't move decisively, quickly, time will wipe us off the board. Indecision will cost us the game.

It may also be helpful to set up time frames to complete various steps of our goals. This ensures we will "push" ourselves a little and allow for scheduling other

activities related to this and other goals.

Once our lists are completed, eliminate the temporarily “impossible” plans. An “impossible” plan may be illegal, immoral, or one that requires skills or materials that we don’t currently have. Note that impossible is in “quotes.” Aside from legal and moral issues, **NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE!** Very difficult maybe, but never impossible! This is especially true if we add God’s power to our power. “All things through Christ are possible.” This additional power is available through the development of faith and prayer.

We must also check our plans against the Great Commandment and the Seven Deadly Sins filter test. Do our plans foster “loving God first, and loving our neighbors as ourselves”? Do our plans include greed, pride, lust, gluttony, anger, sloth, or envy? Is God at the center of our planning? Are our plans leading us to loving actions for ourselves and others?

Recall that success is not a solo effort and that our plans must involve others. Think about who we can help and who can help us. This activity will take us back to the personal inventory list of our “supporting cast.” Also, think about others who may share our goals, or have complementary goals, which can provide support. And don’t forget how God may plan a role in our plans and the resulting activities. The final step is simply to select the most effective thing to do now. This will put us on an immediate track toward our life’s goals. Think about this! By knowing what we really want in life, developing a list of activities to get us there, and initiating action, we are on our way to a more fulfilling and successful life!!

Sounds easy! Well, I’m sorry. There is one small catch. This “things to do” list is work! This list is a

catalogue of the tasks we need to accomplish to get to our end goals. We must work our plans to reach our goals. Art Williams, founder of one of the greatest financial services companies in the world, talks about paying a price for greatness. He's right! There is no free lunch, no easy way. The higher and greater our goals, the higher and greater the price! Of course, the rewards are greater also!!

We may decide later that the price, the effort, is too great—that it is just too much work to achieve our goal. If the load gets too heavy, we are faced with downgrading or eliminating a goal. However, long before we abandon a goal, we should thoroughly review our plans and add alternatives, or stretch out our timeframes.

Napoleon Hill describes perseverance as when our first plan fails, we replace it with a new plan and continue to change our plans until we discover one that works. The key to success is the persistent ability to replace failed plans with new ones. Hill stresses that success requires workable and practical plans. When our plans fail, it is a temporary set back, not a permanent and complete defeat. Step back, develop a new plan, and start again.

“The most intelligent man living cannot succeed in accumulating money, nor any other undertaking, without plans which are practical and workable. Just keep this fact in mind, and remember when our plans fail, that temporary defeat is not permanent failure. It may only mean that our plans have not been sound. Build other plans. Start all over again.

“NO man is ever whipped, until he quits in his own mind!!”

We will no doubt meet Mr. Murphy of Murphy's Law fame who said, “Nothing is as easy as it looks, and everything takes twice as long to do as we planned.” So

play hard! Hang in there! Don't quit! Thousands of successful people have said their greatest success came after their lowest point!

Maltz quotes a psychologist, Dr. Hollingworth, as saying that happiness requires problems and a mental attitude that is ready to meet distress with action toward a solution.

Napoleon Hill further reminds us that most who succeed start slowly and face many challenges before experiencing success. Many who do succeed normally hit a very low point where they meet their "other selves" or our internal abilities to achieve success.

The simple keys are PLANNING AND PERSISTENCE!

Don't forget those tips I mentioned earlier: break down our life's goals into smaller sub-goals that allow us to move toward our goals and do one thing at a time.

Another point to remember is that we are working toward three goals. If we "hit the wall" working towards one of the three goals, move the energy from that goal into the other two. This serves three purposes: 1) We will increase the rate of progress in the two areas at the expense of slow progress in one area, 2) By stepping back we give things time to develop, or mature, on their own, and 3) Often a "take it easy" approach is the best way.

Now that we have talked about hard work, let's talk about the easy work. To achieve success, many times we don't have to do great acts, but only STOP doing certain things! That's right, success may be waiting for us if we DON'T DO something!! How hard is it to do nothing? Remember Bambi's friend, Thumper, and his comment, "If we can't say anything good about someone then don't say anything!" Well, how about this: If we can't do anything

positive to move us towards our goal, then at least don't do anything negative!! I deeply believe that we are our own worst enemy. I see people everyday doing things that run counter to their own life's goals! These people would achieve great success if they would stop certain behaviors and simply continue to do others as they are now!

Let me give some examples of "easy work." Many people have good health as a goal. Here a person can stop smoking, stop drinking, use less salt and sugar, eat less red meat, etc. Good health is promoted by doing exercises and eating a good diet, but good health is also promoted by not doing drugs, tobacco, alcohol, etc. Remember that goals are reached by a combination of DOING POSITIVE THINGS and NOT DOING NEGATIVE THINGS!! Don't create problems for ourselves. Eliminate the anti-goal-directed behaviors. Always move towards our goals; never move away from them.

It would seem to be a simple task not to do something that takes us away from our goals, but guess what, this stopping of negative behaviors can be very difficult. First, we must be aware of the behavior and realize and understand that this action is counterproductive to reaching our goals. We must also realize that any behavior may serve many needs. Almost everyone wants good health, and everyone should know that smoking, for example, is not a healthy habit. So quitting smoking equals better health. But, smoking fills many other social, psychological, and physical needs (tobacco is an addictive drug). Next, rationalization steps in; "I don't smoke that much. Cancer won't happen to me," and so on. Justification follows, "I deserve to smoke, cigarettes are legal, and I can afford them," etc. This process of rationalization and justification can apply to any behavior,

including drugs and alcohol. Old habits and behaviors die hard. We must admit and accept that some of our old behaviors must be stopped so that we can achieve success! We must be willing to change, and change requires effort and commitment! And don't forget prayer!! Ask God for help in defeating those negative behaviors and attitudes. "Seek and you shall receive."

We need to develop plans to stop negative behaviors as well. We should list ten actions to be taken to help us stop a negative behavior, eliminate the "impossible" actions, determine what can be done now, and start working.

Do not underestimate the importance of eliminating negative, anti-goal-directed actions. We must commit ourselves to a more positive and worthy set of behaviors in order to be successful.

Think about this. Overcoming our problems could be our ultimate goal! What would happen if each of us found a way to overcome our own greatest problem and shared that experience with others? Does this fit our definition of success? It sure does!

Now that we know what we must do to get to our life's goals, we must commit ourselves to doing it! Commitment to effort is the key to success! Take it easy, have fun, keep working. Richard Petty, winner of 200 NASCAR stock car races, has a great saying, "We may give in, but we never give up!" Temporary setbacks may flatten us, but pick yourself up and go for it again! We have our plans, and we must commit to action. From now on, when we do things that do not move us toward our goals or do things that move us away from our goals, do them consciously, understanding that we are moving backwards from where we really want to be. Also remember, if we

stop moving backwards we will have a shorter distance to move forward!! Our own behavior, our own choice, determines the direction of travel.

If you are having problems setting goals and developing plans, read Alan Lakein's book How to Get Control of Your Time and Your Life. This book is the best "how to" time management and goal setting program I have seen.

At this point, I want us to pull out our list of the top three goals. I want us to stop and say, "I believe there is a possibility that I can achieve my goals! It just might be possible that I can do it!"

By the way, the above statement is not outrageous since we know what we want (goals) and how we are going to get them (plans).

Next, we are going to look at the heart of the Positive Direction System, ATTITUDES.

## POSITIVE DIRECTION SYSTEM – ATTITUDES – CHAPTER 6

### THE KEY TO SUCCESS

Of the four components of the Positive Direction System the area of attitudes, including a positive self-image with God at the center, is the most critical! Our attitudes reflect and are part of our values and our connection to God. Attitudes and self-image are the fuels that drive our planned activity toward our goals. If we have a positive self-image and positive attitudes and we always hold our goals before us, then the “work” we need to do to be successful will fall into place.

If we doubt the importance of attitudes, self-image, and being God centered, then show me one person who is really successful who has low self-esteem, bad attitudes, and no contact with God. 99.9% of all successful people have the following traits: 1) A positive view of the world and the future, 2) A very positive self-image, 3) A definite plan and direction to their life, 4) Perseverance in the face of effort and temporary setbacks, and 5) An active belief in God.

Positive attitudes, a related positive self-image, and spiritual growth will give us the power to change our plans, and even change our goals, and continue on to success. A positive attitude will see us through the hard times and give us the extra strength to continue when everyone else has gone home.

Napoleon Hill points out, “When Henley wrote the prophetic lines, ‘I am the master of my fate, I am the

captain of my soul,” he should have added that this is true because we can control our thoughts.

Hill further points out our brains become “magnetized” by the primary thoughts in our mind. By a mysterious energy, this magnet attracts people, events, circumstances, and resources that match these primary thoughts. We literally attract what we are thinking about.

Remember, our THOUGHTS = POTENTIAL.

Art Williams says, “The three most important things in winning are attitude, attitude, and attitude!” Art also says, “You can do 99% of the things to make you win, and have a bad attitude, and still lose.”

There is a quote attributed to both Abe Lincoln and to the famous psychologist William James that goes like this, “The single most important thing determining the success or failure of a given endeavor is the attitude of the person starting it.”

Henry Ford said, “If we think we can, or we think we can’t, we’re right!”

Karl Menninger said, “Attitudes are more important than facts in determining a person’s quality of life.”

The Bible says, “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believes.”

It scares me how we train our children the “basics” of survival and yet never apply these lessons to our own lives! To quote The Little Engine that Could, “I think I can, I think I can!!”

I could fill a book with quotes and examples, but I hope we have gotten the point; Positive mental attitudes, a healthy positive self-image, and spiritual growth are required to be successful!! They are key pieces in successful living.

Today, many medical professionals believe that

50% to 75% of all illnesses may be caused by improper mental states. Negative attitudes and a bad self-image can even do physical harm to our body! Positive attitudes and self-image not only support us in achieving our goals, but they will improve our health as well!

As we start to look at attitudes, let's recall that success is the striving toward worthy goals that nurture physical, mental, and spiritual growth in myself and others. Success is the maximizing of my God given potentials and preparing myself to receive the gift of a happy, fulfilled, and purposeful life. Success is the integration of our physical, mental, and spiritual natures directed to the achievement of worthy goals through loving means. Success is the optimum use of our mind, body, and spirit for the greatest good of ourselves and others.

Success is a team effort: you, me, and God. Success requires effort from all three of us and must improve all three of us. Success, by its very nature, is not a solo performance. I have all I need within me to be successful, but I need your help and God's help.

We must recognize our spiritual natures in relation to our attitudes. Attitudes are where our spiritual and mental natures meet and even blend. My personal experience has shown that spiritual development is crucial to the development and maintenance of positive attitudes and a positive self-image. Additionally, spiritual development empowers us with wisdom, serenity, and love in a way that I can't explain. When God centered and directed toward worthy goals, we tap into an inborn power that is always available to us. This power enables us to perform at our highest levels and achieve great things. Faith, like the subconscious mind, defies verifiable description. But, our spirituality may be even more

powerful and important than the subconscious. Our personal relationship with God, our God centered nature, is our greatest source of power, wisdom, love and healing.

Norman Vincent Peale, in In God We Trust, asks if we are trying to live our lives without God as a partner, as an associate, a person we believe in. If we are, we are doomed to failure. He further comments that living without God is negative thinking and will negative results. He also asserts “Positive thinking is a another word for faith.”

Faith has amazing healing and restorative powers. Faith also empowers us with wisdom and gives us strength to do what we otherwise think is impossible. The Bible clearly states in John 14:25, “He that believe in Me, the works I do he shall do also, and greater works than these shall he do.” Jesus is telling us that we can do works not only as he did, but even more and greater works! But, we must have faith! Ephesians 3:20 states, “Unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or can think, accordingly to the power that works in us.” That power is faith, and the greater our faith, the greater is our power.

We must develop faith, our spiritual nature, through prayer and personally experiencing God. Faith is a gift, but we must seek in order to receive. We must open ourselves to this great power. Spiritual growth is one of the keys to success. Success must always have God at the center.

God will bring more love into our lives. God could be defined simply as love, and faith could be defined as loving everything and everyone all the time.

Many of us struggle with a belief in God, something we can't see or touch, something we often can't understand. If the concept of God as good or love doesn't help, let me offer an “alternative” path from Philippians 4:8, “Whatever

things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and there is anything praiseworthy, then meditate on these things.” For me this describes God’s nature in a way that I can comprehend in my finite mind. If I approach God in the way described in this passage, I will indeed experience spiritual growth.

I believe that one of the most important messages that Christ has given us is that faith, belief, and effort will give us true success! We are not slaves of our past, or even current, situations. If we believe, it shall come to pass. Notice also how quickly and completely these changes can take place! Jesus said to the harlot, “Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made you whole.” And the woman was made whole from that hour. Good heart and faith! Not only can we actively change our “programs,” our attitudes and thoughts through our own efforts, but we can also add the tremendous power of faith.

Faith is an extremely powerful attitude! Listen to what Alan Nolan in his book, Jesus Before Christianity, has to say, “Jesus differed from his contemporaries in understanding this to mean that ‘everything is possible for anyone who has faith’, Mark 9:23. The person who has faith becomes like God, all powerful. ‘If you have faith, as a grain of mustard seed, nothing would be impossible to you...’ Mathew 17:20.” Faith is a tremendous power in our lives, and results of faith can be gained instantly. Adding faith to our own efforts to change our attitudes and thoughts creates an unstoppable force for change.

Joseph Murphy in The Powers Of Your Subconscious Mind defines belief and faith. Belief is a thought that empowers our subconscious mind to fill

all aspects of our lives based on our dominant thought patterns. Faith tells us a thought held in our conscious mind will fill our subconscious mind and manifest itself. Further, faith is believing as true what can't be reasoned or sensed and believing in our inner powers.

Peale also contributes to this subject stating that belief is intellectually based, accepting the truth of God in our thoughts. Trust, Peale asserts, is belief activated! Now we can rest on our faith knowing it will carry us through any problem. A world of resources are available to solve our problems when we trust in God.

Our question may be, "Along with my faith, how do I develop this positive attitude and positive self-image?" Don't worry. We are going to work on these very soon.

But first, get out our three key goals sheet. I want us to look at our goals one at a time and say, "There is a real PROBABILITY that I can achieve these!! I've got my goals and plans, and I'm working on my attitudes and self-image. I feel that more than likely I will achieve my goals!!

So we can better understand how this section of the Positive Direction System works, I'm going to give us a quick course in psychology.

The human mind operates on what psychologists call perceptions. Perceptions are what the mind tells us is going on in the world around us. These perceptions are mental creations based on sensory inputs from our five senses. These sensory inputs are processed by the mind using past experiences, expectations, prejudices, beliefs, etc. as "processing agents." Much of this processing takes place in what is called the subconscious mind. The subconscious mind is buried deep in the mind and never makes itself visible directly, but acts through the conscious

mind. We have an awareness of the content of our conscious mind, while we are generally totally unaware of the content of our subconscious mind. If we think of the mind as a filled doughnut, the conscious mind would be the doughnut, the unconscious mind the filling!

The key to all of this is that the mind will act according to its perceptions of reality, which may not reflect the “real world” at all!! Raw input comes to us, we process it, and we act accordingly. This processing step is where our perceptions of reality are formed. But, our perceptions can be wrong! However, the fact that the mind operates on perceptions creates a fabulous opportunity that we will use very soon.

This has been a very incomplete view of the topics of perceptions, the subconscious and conscious mind, but hopefully this treatise will help us understand the mental mechanics of the Positive Direction System that will follow.

The key point to remember is the mind is “deeper” and more complex than we realize in everyday life. We must understand that the processes that we will use shortly are designed to place certain messages into the deepest parts of the brain, the subconscious level, as well as tapping the power within our spiritual nature. It is critical to have all mental and spiritual levels in step and coordinated. This is the only way to achieve success. Engaging in this process may seem foreign, ritualistic, even odd, but it is very critical to the success of the Positive Direction System.

What must happen is a “programming” of our conscious and subconscious minds and an opening of our spirituality aimed toward the successful achievement of our goals! This action will change our perceptions of ourselves

and our abilities and thereby change our behavior! If we believe that we can do A and not do B, we will have a very difficult time to do B, but if we believe that we can do B, we will eventually do it! Our attitudes equal our potential.

Psychologists have made one of the most significant discoveries of all time: The mind is programmed to perform certain behaviors, and that these programs can be changed!! Change the program, change the behavior, and change the results. Remember that our mind and our behaviors are controlled by our perceptions. Very simple. Not necessarily easy.

The Positive Direction System uses two main processes to “program” our minds and create our positive attitudes, positive self-image, expand our spirituality, as well as to create a clear image of our worthy goals. One process I have had us doing for a while is called VISUALIZATION—or in plain English, imagining—in this case imagining ourselves as having positive attitudes and achieving our goals. The second process is what I call AFFIRMATION, or if we prefer a non-religious term, programming. Let’s deal with the area of visualization first.

Visualization has been called by one writer “image engineering.” It is the process of using our imagination to create an image of our goals. This may seem like child’s play or a trip to dreamland, but we use this process all the time! Do we ever worry? If we worry, we are using visualization in a negative way! When we worry, in our mind and only in our mind, we create all sorts of horrible events and situations that MAY occur!! 99% of the time, what we worry about never happens! But we create this disastrous, worst case image in our mind. I’ll tell you now, to be successful, we must reverse this process all the time and think only of the most positive possible outcomes all

the time!!

The key is that the mind cannot tell the difference between an actual event and one that is vividly imagined!! Visualization then becomes a way to reload or re-record the contents of our mind. Once we “reload” our mind with positive attitudes, self-image, and our goals, the natural goal seeking mechanism can carry us toward our goals.

Starting NOW, I want you to see yourself right now, right here, as ALREADY HAVING ACHIEVED YOUR GOALS!! Again, stop and see yourself NOW as already having achieved your goals. Whatever your goals are, how remote they may seem, see yourself as there NOW!!

The next statement seems totally outrageous, but it is true: If we hold a vision in our mind long enough and believe in ourselves and God (faith), we will achieve that vision!! We will become the vision and achieve the goals in our mind. Some people say that if we hold a vision in our mind, that we don't have to do anything!! They believe that we will naturally move towards our goal without any conscious effort! Personally, I believe goal directed, planned effort will move us forward in less time. However, there is no doubt that visualizing our goals “magnetizes” our life and will attract people, circumstances, and opportunities that move us towards the achievement of those goals. Strange as it sounds, these goal seeking “actions” are sometimes totally unplanned and often happen without us really knowing it. Visualization not only gives our minds a clear view of our goals, it adds another dimension or component to our planned goal seeking activity.

This visualization process is driving our goals into the deepest parts of our mind. Visualization will bring our entire mind into play to achieve our goals. See

yourself NOW achieving our goals at this very moment! Use “reverse worry” all the time! See yourself in positive situations, successful outcomes, always achieving your goals. “Worry” in a positive way instead of negative! Always have a positive, “can do” vision of yourself!!

While visualizing your goals, use your “mind’s eye.” Do not simply say your goals, but also “see” your goals in the greatest detail that you can possibly create in your mind. Put yourself in the position of having already achieved your goals and imagine what it will be like to be there!! See your goals, feel your goals, and hear your goals! Fill this image with as much detail as possible. Put emotion and feeling into your experiences and make it as real and powerful as you can! Thoughts mixed with emotion have a much greater impact on your mind.

Prayer is key here. Additionally, visualize your goals within a meditative, silent prayer. This brings God’s power and faith into the mix and adds enormous power.

We must take time on a regular basis to completely visualize our goals; once a week is probably a minimum. Take at least a half hour and immerse ourselves in our goals, feel them, smell them, taste them, use all our senses and all our emotions, and pray. Be there now!

The second process we will use to enhance our self-image and attitudes is what I call programming. This section involves the writing and use of an Affirmation or if we prefer, a programming statement. The continued use of this affirmation will program our mind at all levels and prepare us to be successful. This affirmation is a brief statement that includes key successful attitudes, beliefs, and our goals. An affirmation is defined as a positive statement of belief, a summary of key beliefs and attitudes, and a directive for action.

Don't be concerned about being swept away in some kind of cult! The Positive Direction System allows us to release our potentials in a direction we choose and control! We are achieving the goals that we personally have chosen!

Our minds are already filled with programs that tell us how things are, who we are, what we can and can't do, and what our future will be like. The problem is that most of these programs are either wrong or are way below our real potential. Also, our minds are continually receiving new programs through everything around us. Our minds are being programmed every minute of every day. These programs are being sent out by people and institutions for THEIR benefit and not necessarily ours. What I'm proposing here is that we at least spend a few minutes a day programming our own mind to achieve our own goals! In fact, all we are doing is taking control of our mind and its operation.

Hill illuminates this topic by reminding us that we are constantly in an environment where many thoughts are reaching our subconscious mind without us realizing it. Some of these thoughts are good, some are not. Our task is to eliminate the flow of negative thoughts and support the positive. This process gives us greater control over our minds.

Notice that when I introduced the concept of affirmation, I said this will allow us to achieve our goals. Many times, the perceptions in our minds prevent us from achieving our goals. If we can change these perceptions, we can then realize our full potential and achieve what we now think is impossible. Negative perceptions block behavior; positive perceptions promote behavior.

When we combine the processes of visualization and affirmation, we have a direct way to create the positive

self-image and positive attitudes we need to be successful. Through these exercises, we are opening our spiritual channels and changing the mental perceptions that govern our behavior.

The key component in programming is the writing and use of a personal affirmation.

The first step in writing our affirmation is to get our list of our top three goals. These goals must be included in the affirmation. Like visualization, this statement will be written in the present tense as if we have already achieved our goals.

Don't write an affirmation that says, "I might be successful." Write a statement that says, "I am successful!!" Remember what I said earlier, success is the process of achieving worthy goals. Developing the proper mindset is the most critical step in this process, so to that extent we are already successful.

The second step in this process is to develop a list of attitudes we need to be successful. This list will be different for each of us. Individually, we may or may not need more self-confidence, enthusiasm, perseverance, and so on. Each of us has different strengths and areas that need improvement.

This list of attitudes requires some tough personal examination. Evaluate our skills and the areas in need of improvement. You may find it helpful to make separate lists of attributes and areas that need to be enhanced. Be very honest here! Identifying a problem is half the solution. We must know our weaknesses to turn them into strengths! Don't forget the continuous development of our relationship with God on this list. You could say that keeping God at the center of our lives is an attitude.

I believe that there are some attitudes that are

almost universally needed to be successful:

1) Always be positive and optimistic. Find something good in everything and everybody, think positive, talk positive, eat and sleep positive!! Be optimistic!! Norman Vincent Peale says it so well: “Optimism is a philosophy based on the belief that life is good, and that in the long run, the good life overbalances the evil. Also in every difficulty, every pain, there is some inherent good, and the optimist means to find that good. An optimist is a person who believes in a good outcome, even when he can’t yet see it. He is a person who believes in a greater day, when there is no evidence of it. He is one who believes in his own future, when he can’t see much possibility in it.” I also believe that optimism and faith go hand in hand.

2) Think of the present. We can’t change the past, but we do control our present efforts and thereby can maximize our future potentials. We are responsible for our best efforts and hopeful about the results! Remember that all success is a gift. We must try as best we can and accept the results.

3) Think outward with love. Think beyond ourselves. After all, we don’t live in an isolated world. Remember that our success includes the success of others. We must be willing to help others. We must love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Reach out with love and understanding to everyone.

4) Be humble. It may seem strange in this discussion of unlimited human potential to talk about humility. Humility is indeed a strange paradox. We must realize we need help, help from others and help from God. Each of us has a job that only we can do, a role that only we can play. However, we all need help to accomplish these

tasks. We must always remember that all of our talents and abilities are created by God, not something created by us. They are gifts. Our job is to maximize the use of these gifts for the benefit of all. However, being human, we are limited in what we can do alone. By our nature we have limited capabilities and capacities. Humility empowers us because it allows us to reach out for help from our fellows and from God. Once we reach out for help, our power to live successfully increases dramatically.

5) Be calm and confident. We know where we are going and how we are going to get there. Develop serenity and peace of mind. Serenity is a direct byproduct of spiritual growth, and prayer is the key. Pray every morning and every night for 90 days and you will feel serenity and growing peace of mind. You will be calm and confident. And after 90 days, keep praying.

Obviously, there are attitudes that we need to cultivate in order to live successfully, but equally important, there are attitudes that we want to avoid. Again we meet our old friends, the Seven Deadly Sins. Do not develop an attitude of false pride, believing totally in our own ability to do everything by ourselves, with no help from others or God. Do not ever place ourselves “above” anyone, thinking that we are better than someone else. Watch for anger; approach everything and everyone with love. Avoid greed and envy. Seeking material gains beyond our needs and being displeased when others are successful is not successful living. Gluttony is equally destructive—consume only what we need and do not over-consume anything. Lust is another dangerous behavior. Endlessly, obsessively focusing on sex or the possession of anything destroys our ability to concentrate on the task at hand and maintain priorities. Finally, sloth, or laziness, is fatal. We

must continually move forward, especially in our spiritual growth. By focusing our lives growing our faith and love, we will live abundantly.

Don't let any of these negative attitudes creep into your lives. Many of these seem like good traits and positive motivations, but beware! Check any attitude against the Great Commandment; does this attitude place the love of God first and promote the love of my neighbor as well as myself?

One of the most negative of all attitudes is fear! We must eliminate fear and doubt from our lives. I believe that fear is at the root of all evil. Once fear sets in, faith gets pushed aside, and we often start living on the basis of one of the seven deadly sins. We often try to bury our fear with pride, anger, greed, envy, sloth, lust, or gluttony. Fear plays a much larger role in our lives than most of us realize. The only way to combat fear is through faith, prayer, and spiritual growth. As our relationship with God grows, we gain strength, wisdom, peace of mind, and a sense that we will be taken care of no matter what happens. This is the only way to defeat fear. Faith will always triumph over fear. Remember, "God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and a sound mind."

Once we have our goals and attitudes in front of us, write our affirmation, in the present tense, that contains all these elements. Let me help us with some examples.

First, I'll give you my personal statement and a brief review of how I developed it. My three key goals are 1) physical and mental health, 2) spiritual development, and 3) the establishment and maintenance of quality personal relationships. I felt I needed more self-confidence and some prodding to make sure I worked hard to achieve success. I have always wanted to have some positive

impact on the world at large. Finally, as upbeat and positive as I generally am, I wanted to make sure that I make a point of being happy and positive. Additionally, I wanted to remind myself of my commitment to spiritual development and my reliance on God for all success in my life. My affirmation reads as follows:

This is a great day God, I will rejoice in  
your grace!  
I am happy, healthy, and successful!  
I will work hard with love to better the  
world and all people.  
With you God, I will work hard and  
overcome all obstacles and achieve  
our goals.  
With faith and a reliance on you God,  
love, happiness, health, confidence,  
serenity, gratitude, and humility, fill  
my life.

Notice that everything here is in the present tense: “I am,” “I will,” etc. Note that everything is positive. Note also how my goals weave throughout the affirmation. Our goals do not have to be explicitly laid out in our programming statement word for word, since they are written on our goal sheet. This statement is designed to support the skills and attitudes needed to reach our goals and to move our goals deep into our mind.

Let me give you another example of a programming statement, this time from a 65-year-old lady. Her goals are: 1) financial independence, 2) good health, and 3) to remain independent and to continue to be supportive of her husband and family. This lady also recognized

a very common tendency in herself of being negative about many things. Becoming more positive overall then became a crucial step in achieving her goals. This is her programming statement:

Today is a positive day.  
I am healthy and happy.  
I have a good attitude.  
I am financially secure.  
I am a helpful, friendly, patient and  
forgiving person.  
I thank God for all my blessings.

Note again that everything is in the present tense: “I am,” “I have,” etc. Note also that many of the “required” attributes are included in the statement.

Our affirmation will change and evolve over time. We should always look to refine and improve our statement, but make only small changes with each revision to maintain continuity. When making changes, always adhere to the general rules: 1) Keep it brief, 2) Keep it in the present tense, 3) Work in our key goals and attitudes, and 4) Keep it God centered.

Once our affirmation is written, a daily schedule of reading our affirmation must be maintained!! We must read this statement to ourselves at least twice a day!!

I find the best time to read the affirmation is just before going to bed and again just before starting our day. This gives us two readings per day which I feel is the minimum number of exposures. A third reading mid-day wouldn't hurt. When we read our statement, follow this procedure: 1) Read each line out loud; a whisper is okay as long as we can hear it, 2) Repeat each line in our

imagination, or in our head, and let all the words sink in, 3) Read the statement slowly and with feeling and emotion, and 4) Read the statement at least twice a day.

This process will fill all levels of our mind with the proper positive attitudes and a vision of us achieving our goals. When we add this to our clearly defined goals and our definite plans and activities, we are on our way to being successful!!

In addition to reading our affirmation, using visualization, we must also establish a daily routine of prayer. A great idea is to tie the reading of the affirmation with a time of prayer. This will grow our faith and keep God at the center of our lives. During our day's activities, saying a quick prayer is a great habit to develop. A simple "Yes, God" or "Help me, God" will keep God in the center of our lives. Our ongoing conversations with God will empower us with faith, strength, love, and wisdom beyond our individual capacities. Prayer is critical to success! Spiritual growth will have a huge impact on our attitudes and self-image.

This part of the Positive Direction System is really a multimedia campaign for the mind! We see the statement, we hear the statement, and the repeated exposures to the statement strengthens its message! This simple formula is used by teachers, parents, and advertisers everyday, and guess what, it works!! Visualization, Affirmation, and Prayer combine to create a powerful force for personal change.

Hill supports this process with his assertion that we become what the dominating thoughts are in our minds. These thoughts we place in our minds, when mixed with our emotions and given mental support, create the driving force that leads to all of our actions.

Over the coming weeks and months, our goals, improved attitudes, and growing spirituality will become embedded in all levels of our mind. This will give us a focus and a belief that is not possible from any other method that I am aware of. Stay with this part of the program. It will take time and effort, but a change will take place! Someone said, “For things to change, we must change!” The use of our affirmation, visualization, and prayer will help make those changes.

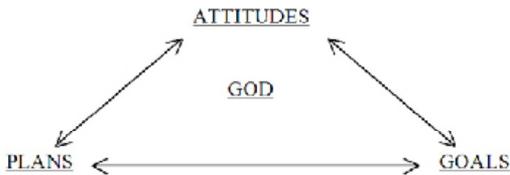
The following final chapter will tie together the entire Positive Direction System and show how the areas of Goals, Plans, and Attitudes, with God at the center, all work together.



# THE POSITIVE DIRECTION SYSTEM – SUMMARY – CHAPTER 7

## A LOOK FORWARD, A LOOK BACK

This chapter will tie together the elements of the Positive Direction System that have been discussed in the previous chapters. You will recall the key elements are: 1) Attitudes, 2) Goals, 3) Plans, 4) With God at the center. The diagram below will show the interrelationships of the four elements.



The purpose of the Positive Direction System is to direct us to a successful life. The definition of success is the striving toward worthy goals that nurture physical, mental, and spiritual growth in myself in others. Success is the maximizing of my God given potentials and preparing myself to receive the gift of a fulfilled, happy, and purposeful life. Success is a life lived to a higher purpose. Success could simply be defined as life with love and for love. Everything I do should be for the complete growth of myself and others.

We also can't live successfully without recognizing the three aspects of our being: the physical, mental, and spiritual. Successful living means the development and care of all three of these areas. Of these three, I believe

that spiritual development is the key to successful living. Being God centered is a very practical and useful tool. Spirituality, our relationship with God, gives our life meaning, and it becomes the why of life. Being God centered is itself a goal of life, its real and lasting meaning. Spiritual insight also prevents us from making a deadly sin a goal. Our plans must pass the spiritual test of loving God first and loving our neighbors as ourselves. Faith then empowers us with the strength and wisdom to put our plans into action. Finally, with spiritual growth, our attitudes become centered on the enduring values of love, serenity, and peace of mind. Positive Direction should lead us to a life of wisdom, a life of intelligence, effort, and love. If we think of God as love and think of faith as living while loving everything and everybody always, we will be living successfully.

We have talked separately about the three elements of attitudes, plans, and goals, but in reality they merge. This is also true of our physical, mental, and spiritual natures. Success happens when all of these aspects and elements are merged and directed toward worthy goals.

Now let's look at the individual elements of the Positive Direction System.

Let's start with goals. In order to get from life what we want, we must know what it is we really want!! We may have been surprised to find that we were like most people and really didn't know what we wanted from life. In Chapter 4 we engaged in a process of identifying our personal life goals. This is one of the key steps in the Positive Direction System. We will never get anywhere unless we know where we are going!!

As we review our goals again, we should test these goals for true worthiness. We must be very careful

not to create a goal based on pride, greed, lust, anger, gluttony, sloth, or envy. We must be very careful of our rationalizations and justifications; absolute honesty is critical. Beware of self-deception! A goal based on one of the seven deadly sins will not lead us to successful living.

Additionally, we must test our goals against the Great Commandment of first loving God with all our heart, mind and soul and to love neighbors as ourselves. If we put God first in our lives, love our neighbors as ourselves, and do nothing else, we will be living successfully. This should be our primary goal and theme of our lives. We should never compromise these principles to gain any other goal.

Also, we have written down our goals and are reading them at least once a day. This will keep us on track and keep us alerted for any opportunity to move toward our goals.

Every two or three months we should redo the goal setting exercise using the method in Chapter 4 and adjust our goals as needed. Flexibility is needed but DO NOT GIVE UP on a goal when the going gets tough.

Once our goals were clear, we needed plans to achieve these goals. Once we knew where we wanted to go, we needed a way to get there. This topic is covered in detail in Chapter 5, and a key point to remember is what we can do now to move us towards our goals. Also, don't forget that planning will include not doing negative things or any activity that moves us away from a goal.

The implication of planning is that it will lead to some activity!! We will have work towards our goals!! Success is the process, the striving, the working towards our goals. And, the greater the goal, the harder and longer we will have to work. Great results come from great efforts!

Our plans and the resulting activities must also fit our view of successful living. Recall that success means the growth and well being of ourselves and others. We cannot grow at the expense of others. Everything we do must promote the physical, mental, and spiritual well being of everyone. We are responsible to ensure everything we do passes this critical test.

Our plans also must fall within the Great Commandment. Everything must be done with love as its method and its goal. At this point, plans and goals become one with love.

Once we had our goals and plans in place, the most crucial element in the Positive Direction System was added, attitudes, including a positive self image and spiritual growth. Once we knew where we wanted to go and how we were going to get there—and that what we were doing was right for us and others—we had to believe that we could actually do it!

In order for us to release the internal, natural success mechanism, we must have a healthy positive image of ourselves and the world around us. Additionally, we need ongoing spiritual growth. Chapters 1, 2, and 6 all cover this area thoroughly. If you are having problems in this area, re-read those chapters and try again.

We must focus on developing the key attitudes of commitment, honesty, humility, joy, happiness, and serenity. We must always look out for the positive, we must always look outward toward others, and we must always focus on right now. And, above all, we must develop attitudes of love and faith.

Even our attitudes must measure up to the Great Commandment of loving God first with all our hearts, minds, and souls, and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

Attitudes of love and faith are the keys to successful living. Love and faith in action is living successfully.

The methods of attitude development and spiritual growth are a vivid visualization of our goals, a daily reading of our affirmation statement, plus a daily regiment of prayer. Constant effort is required to develop and then maintain positive attitudes in the face of all the negatives we encounter in our everyday lives. It takes work to build the “faith” necessary to achieve our goals, but it can be done!

We must always remember the results we enjoy in our lives are gifts given to us by God. Positive Direction helps us till the soil and plant the seeds, but God makes the plant grow. Whatever results we get from the process of successful living are always best for us in the long run. This is true even though it may not appear that way at the time. We can expect adversity, but we must remember that God will always take care of us. We must always remember that we are not what we accomplish, but the good that we continue to try to do.

Recall also our definition of success: Success is the striving towards worthy goals, goals that nurture physical, mental, and spiritual growth in myself and others. Success is the maximizing of my God given potentials, preparing myself to receive the gifts of a fulfilled, happy, and purposeful life. Success is the integration of our physical, mental, and spiritual natures, directed to the achievement of worthy goals through loving means. Success is the optimum positive use of my mind, body, and spirit for the greatest good of myself and others. Success is not something to be attained, but a way of life.

Remember that we are a physical, mental, and spiritual being. Our plans become our activity, our physical

nature. Our goals give us direction and are our mental nature. Our attitudes give us energy and are connected to our spiritual nature. Successful living will surround this process, giving us purpose, a mission, all leading to positive, loving results in our lives.

Positive Direction gives our life direction and purpose, not total control. It is the difference between domination and dedication, the difference between compulsion and commitment, and the difference between control and consecration. When we work to maximize our internal physical, mental, and spiritual powers, the external, material things take care of themselves.

The Positive Direction System may seem very simple and basic. Well, it is very simple and basic!! The art of successful living is not a complex, superhuman pursuit. It does require dedication and effort, but the concept is very simple. These ideas are not new; in fact, they are based in some of the oldest teachings from many cultures.

The only thing I ask of you as a reader is to give this system an honest try. Put some time and effort behind yourself and see what we can really do!! The future is yours, and the sky is the limit!! Good luck!

## PERSONAL INVENTORY

### PERSONAL

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### IMMEDIATE SUPPORT

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### AVAILABLE POTENTIALS

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TOP 3 GOALS

3 MONTHS:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

1 YEAR:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

5 YEAR:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

LIFETIME:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

3 MOST IMPORTANT GOALS OVERALL:

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_



# PLANNING SHEET

GOAL 1:

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GOAL 2:

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GOAL 3:

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PLANNING SHEETS

GOAL 1 - CURRENT ACTIVITY:

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GOAL 2 - CURRENT ACTIVITY:

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GOAL 3 - CURRENT ACTIVITY:

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— NOTES —

— NOTES —

— NOTES —

# ***This Book Changes Everything!!!***

Life's Directions is a concise program of goal setting, plan development, and positive attitudes, finely tuned, and compacted into a simple, workable system.

*The big news...*

*These activities are built around a positive value system based on spiritual growth and a relationship with God.*

This book revolutionizes the self-help world!!! This book breaks new ground in combining spiritual growth with personal growth. The entire process is immersed in a positive in a value system that leads to worthy goals, life giving plans, and empowering positive attitudes. The result is a productive, purposeful, value centered life.

Life's Direction is a unique journey of discovery, choice, and change.

*An Owners Manual For The Human Race*