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# Personal Excellence

October 2008

The Magazine of Life Leadership

INSPIRATIONAL • PATRIOTISM

## Be a Patriot-Leader

*Pledge your life and sacred honor.*

by Glenn Beck

**W**E ARE ALL FACING TOUGH TIMES, BUT TODAY I bring you a new message. It's not about floods or fires, about the stock market being down or the price of oil and gas being up. My message is this: *All is well!* We will make it—as long as we ask ourselves the question, who are we?

*Who are we?* Are we the country with our best days behind us? Is that who we are? Are we the people who *beg* a foreign government that drowns its people in rice patties for more money? Are we the people whose president begs a sheik for more oil? Are we the people who are mired in a war we can't win?

*Or*, are we the people who free men from tyranny, who free men's minds, who have freed *millions* of people in the last 100 years alone? Are we losers, or are we winners who change the world? Are we the people who brought the world the light bulb, the car, the telephone, the movie, the assembly line, the artificial heart, the computer, bifocals, the sewing machine, the refrigerator, the internet, air conditioner, safety pins, the television, cash registers, crayons, power tools, the oil well, the water tower, the popsicle, blue jeans, the elevator, the repeating rifle, the laser, polio vaccine, microwave ovens, the copy machine, fiber optics, cotton candy, and scones?

In a time when America is *begging* for a leader, when America is *shouting out*, "Where is the leader? *When* will he step forward?" I am here to tell you, *you* are the leader. The leader we seek, the leader we need is *you*. It always has been.

### What Role Can You Play?

I enjoy reading stories about the founding fathers to learn what they are really like. George Washington is my current favorite. I love him. He's a guy who didn't want to serve politics. God bless him! You've all heard the story of Valley Forge. You already know that they were cold and starving and without enough shoes, pants, shirts and blankets. But do you know that George Washington would have his wife, Martha, come in every winter to make shirts and pants?

I lived just one mile out of Valley Forge. The capital at the time was Philadelphia. It's just a 20-minute drive by car from Valley Forge to Philadelphia—in *traffic*. Yet the government, the congress, did little then to support the troops (not much has changed). It was because of the fierce determination of one man, who was *just* a man.

He wasn't a politician. He was *just* serving his people by serving God. That's why he did it.

Now, you need to ask yourself, "Who am I? What role do I play?"

### Don't Hide From Your Faith

Many people have forgotten God. We're a country that is *so* proud of our many *different* faiths. And yet, at the same time, we *often* hide from our faith. We *cannot* forget God. We *cannot* continue buying into the lie that this country is *not* a special place, that we *are not* a special people. We *are* a special people—and we were brought to this land for a reason.

If you look at our history—from Columbus to today—you will *see* that when men hum-

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bled themselves, the path to this country was clear. When men grew in arrogance, the Lord pushed *them* away from this land.

This is a special place. If you don't believe me, read the diaries of the pilgrims. The pilgrims came from England—in two boats, the *Mayflower* and the *Speedwell*. The *Speedwell* loaded up with pilgrims, and they sailed out. But they soon turned around and came back to England. Many on board had decided not to come to North America—they wanted to go to South America. At the time, nobody wanted to come to North America because it was a bloodbath. Because *every* time someone would come to these shores, they got greedy. They saw gold and they were destroyed; they were slaughtered.

When the *Speedwell* returned, John Robinson, the pastor of the pilgrims, knew that something wasn't right. He gathered all the remaining pilgrims and knelt down in prayer. The pastor said, "Lord, we'll do thy will. Tell us where are we supposed to go?"

The answer: "North America." The pilgrims looked at him, according to their diaries, and, in a nutshell, said, "Get back down on your knees and get another answer."

They prayed. Some of them left the *Speedwell*, and said, "We're not going to North America." But those who remained *knew* that they were doing God's will. In fact, Pastor John Robinson wrote in his diary: "They were going to the place the Lord described to them as the New Jerusalem—that there the Lord would build his temples."

## Join the New Pioneers

We have been preserved for some great purpose. We are a *special* land. We must recognize it—just as those pioneers whom we call pilgrims. That's what they were—they were pioneers, just like the new pioneers recognized that we now call founding fathers. The pilgrims came as pioneers, they humbled themselves, and they served God. The next wave came, they were our founding fathers, they humbled themselves, and they served God. Just like the other pioneers who humbled themselves and *tamed* the West. *We* are this country's next great dispensation's pioneers. *We* are the ones who will take us into a new place beyond your wildest imagination. It will be hard, it will be rough, but, *oh*, we will have this tale to tell. We just have to be who we really are.

People ask me all the time, "Glenn, where's the hope?" The *hope* is found in just waking up. The *hope* is in the recognition of *who* we truly are, *not* who we've allowed ourselves to become. All we have to do is *remember*. All we have to do is remember and celebrate and wake each other up.

We talk all the time about our problems in this country. Well, now *everybody in the whole world* knows our problems. Now it's time for the next chapter. Let's start talking about the things that are great. As we *argue* about illegal immigration, let's remember: People are *dying* in the desert to have a *small piece* of what we take for granted everyday. How could it be a place not worth fighting for, if people will give their *lives* just for a small piece in the shadow? It is a *blessed* land, a *great* land.

We are the United States of America. We can solve *any* problem. But not in Washington. *Here*. The answer never comes from Washington—never has, never will.

It's not like James Madison was writing the Constitution and Ben Franklin leaned over and said, "Hey, you can't make the first three words in that font size. It's *way* too big. It'll never fit on the page." The Founders put those first three words as a code to us because they *knew* that we'd be so stupid; we'd be walking around going, "Geez, these clowns in Washington. They're never going to get anything done." What's the answer? The answer's right there. It's like a beacon: WE THE PEOPLE. *That's* the answer. We just have to recognize it and remember who we are.

## We Are All on Duty

Today, I'm wearing a pin that I've never worn before. I keep it in my living room in a case with the flag that flew over the World Trade Center. It was given to me by a NYC police officer. It just says *WTC*. It means that you were on duty that day. I wear it today because I want to remind myself. I've never worn it because it's something very special to me, but also because I hadn't realized that *I was* on duty that day. *You* were on duty that day. And *we are all on duty today!*

The founding fathers gave us a map out of anything. They were *magnificent* and divinely inspired. When they gathered in hot and humid Philadelphia to sign the *Declaration of Independence* (July 2, 1776), they knew that they were signing their own death warrant. They *knew* if their names were on that document, they would be killed. But each one of them stepped forward and signed it. My favorite line in the *Declaration* is the last line: "And in support of this Declaration, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor."

I pledge to you my life, my fortune, and my sacred honor; and I would ask you to look someone in the eyes and pledge to each other your life, your fortune, and your sacred honor. You and I are on duty today! **PE**



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**ACTION:** *Become a new pioneer patriot.*

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# Emotional Freedom

## Stop the emotional vampires.



by Judith Orloff

**E**MOTIONAL FREEDOM COMES from respecting your energy needs so you're not drained by stress and negativity.

You and I need to cherish our precious energy so we don't compromise our capacity for passion. The most profound transformations can only occur on an energetic level. My approach to emotional freedom, which I call *Energy Psychiatry*, facilitates a rebuilding of subtle energies, the most basic life force.

### Do You Get Drained?

Your body is composed of energy fields. Daily you encounter a range of energies, positive and negative. *Positive energy* includes compassion, courage, forgiveness, and faith. *Negative energy* includes fear, anger, hopelessness, and shame. You need to be an expert at dealing with energy so you don't get demolished by draining situations or people who are energy vampires.

If you have intuitive empathy, you're so sensitive to energy that you can be drained by it. This goes beyond feeling sympathy for distraught friends—you actually take on their pain either emotionally or physically. To cope, you take refuge in solitude. You are so attuned to others that you can feel what's going on inside of them. This can

put you on energy overload and aggravate chronic fatigue and overeating.

Growing up, my girlfriends couldn't wait to hit the malls, but I dreaded them. I felt overwhelmed and exhausted around crowds. "What's the matter?" friends would ask. I knew that crowded places and I didn't mix. I absorbed the energy of people around me. As my intuition matured, I realized I had intuitive empathy. Once I learned to protect my energy, empathy has become a gift that enhances my compassion.

The more people per square foot, the more our energy fields intersect—thus we tend to become overloaded in high-density areas. *Empaths* can manifest many unexplained symptoms. Empaths are notoriously misdiagnosed. For example, obese people may need strate-

gies other than diet to protect themselves from negative energy.

*How do you know if you're an intuitive empath?* Ask yourself: Have you ever sat next to someone at a dinner who seems pleasant, but suddenly you're nauseous, have a headache, or feel drained? Are you uncomfortable in crowds, even avoid them? Do you get easily over-stimulated by people or prefer being alone? When someone is in pain, do you start feeling it too? Do you overeat around people you're uncomfortable with? If you answer *yes* to one or more questions, you likely experience intuitive empathy. Responding *yes* to every question indicates empathy is draining your energy.

### A Survival Guide

*Do how can you protect yourself from emotional vampires?* You need not be an empath to experience the fang marks of energy vampires. Relationships are always an energy exchange. To feel your best, you must ask yourself: Who gives me energy? Who saps it? Surround yourself with supportive, heart-centered people who make you feel safe and secure. Also, identify the energy vampires who leech your energy.

Positive energy in others can rejuvenate you. For instance, you're nervous about a job interview; but the minute you meet your prospective boss, you relax. He's so calm and welcoming, you calm down. Or perhaps you have a good friend around whom you feel loved. Gravitates toward energy-givers.

Energy vampires exude negative energy that drains you. Some vam-

pires are intentionally malicious; others are oblivious to their effect. Some are overbearing and obnoxious; others are friendly and charming. For example, you're at a party talking to a nice person, but suddenly you're nauseous or weak. Or a co-worker drones on about how she broke up with her boyfriend. Eventually, she feels better, but you're spent. On an energy level, such people suck you dry.

You need to watch out for many types of vampires: *Drama Queens* who wear you out with their dramas; *Sob Sisters* who whine all the time; *Blamers* who cut you down with criticism; and *Go-For-The-Carotid* types who purposely cut your down without respect for your feelings. Be aware of their methods, and stop them from draining you.

### Dealing With Vampires

Here are five strategies for dealing with emotional vampires:

**1. List people in your life who give energy, and people who drain energy.** Identify the energy vampires, and evaluate ones you'd like to limit contact with or eliminate. To improve your physical and emotional well-being, schedule time with people who give off positive energy and avoid drainers.

**2. Set clear boundaries.** Limit the time you spend discussing a vampire's gripes. When approaching her, remember: the difference between being a bitch and setting boundaries is attitude. Instead of saying, "You're selfish and self-obsessed, I can't take you anymore," take a breath and shift to your heart.

**3. Meditate.** Meditation is a life-line to your center. It will ground you. By calming the mind, you can re-align with your essence. Close your eyes. Focus on your breath. Gently extend your awareness downward to strata, bedrock, minerals, and soil. From the base of your spine, feel a continuity with the earth's core. Allow the earth's energy to infuse your body and stabilize you.

**4. Walk away.** If you feel your energy being zapped, politely excuse yourself from a killing conversation. Move at least 20 feet from the person, outside the range of his or her energy field. Don't worry about appearing rude or hurting the vampire's feelings.

**5. Build an energy shield around you.** When you're with vampires and you can't get away, visualize a protective shield of white light surrounding you. This lets positive energy in, and keeps negative energy out. This works well with vampires at family dinners or social events where you're trapped.

To keep your positive energy in crowds or stressful situations, take a few deep breaths to exhale negative energy. Meditate daily to center yourself. Take daily baths or showers to wash off negative vibes.

As you learn to assert your energy needs, you achieve more emotional freedom. Never put yourself down as being "overly sensitive." Sensitivity is an asset—as long as you protect yourself from negative vibes. Knowing how you react energetically is vital if you're chronically tired and want to build vitality. Knowledge is power. Meeting your energy needs can balance mind, body, and spirit to create a vibrant life. **PE**

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**ACTION:** Protect your emotional energy.

# Fatal Flaw

Everybody has one.



by Stuart Atkins

**C**HARACTERISTICS THAT make you effective can also cause your downfall.

Your effective action can become excessive and counterproductive if stressful problems remain unsolved or ignored.

As you confront new problems, risks, responsibilities, and relationships, the overload causes stress—and stress signals are embedded in daily behavior.

If you observe yourself in action, you can see exaggerations or excesses—indicating the degree to which stressful problems and people are affecting you.

## Fight, Flight, Fret, and Frustrate

When you face threats or difficulties, you experience biochemical changes in the brain and body that prepare you to stay and fight, take off in flight, fret and worry, or frustrate yourself with endless analysis and options.

**Fight.** With some stressful problems, you are likely to fight. Forced action is your central response. Blaming others and getting defensive are other signals.

You make others feel defensive by being overly competitive and combat-ready. You press people—not allowing them breathing room to decide. You respond without checking policies or clearing with authorities. You tend to run yourself ragged, often diffusing your effort, and won't let others sufficiently advise you or be a resource.

You may cope with stressful problems by being quick to respond with intensified effort and a sense of urgency. This becomes counter-productive when you race around and act unilaterally. Your *urgency* can exaggerate to *emergency*, making others feel pressured.

**Flight.** With some stressful problems, you take flight, avoiding trouble and sidestepping confrontation or flip-flopping and over-compromising, creating doubt about your true position. You make light of trouble, creating a sense of artificial well-being, or smooth over disagreement and prevent objections. You convey a lack of commitment or involvement by easy or uncontested agreement. You willingly assume responsibility, take the blame, and try to do better by working harder or longer hours.

**Fret.** With some problems, your signal is to fret—worry underlies your

actions. Or you might blame yourself for problems and give in to people. You become critical of yourselves and others. Or you over-rely on others for decisions; become self-denying and make concessions; accept unreasonable demands; give in to opposition rather than be seen as uncooperative; or become moralistic and convey injustice done to you.

You may analyze alternatives, set priorities, and approach the problem systematically. However, in excess, analysis paralysis can set in, decision deadlines can be missed, and the hazards and urgency in the situation can be ignored.

**Frustrate.** Under much stress, you are likely to frustrate. Your lack of flexibility predominates and blocks progress. Or you withdraw and becoming stubborn. You detach yourself from the problem, frustrating others. Or, you lock

into analysis paralysis and fail to take decisive action; or you document your position with facts and detail. Refusing to bridge when new solutions are recommended; you stick to old ways, intellectualize the problem, and fail to experience the urgency and hazards.

**Fright.** Fright is basic to all four stress signals—fright precedes the four stress responses to danger—fight, flight, fret or frustrate follow the fright when you think you see a threat to meeting your goals or being the person you want to be.

You need the courage and skill to face problems, ways to solve them, and ways to tolerate problems while they're being solved, or when they can't be solved. **PE**

*Dr. Stuart Atkins is the author of Life in the Stress Lane, (Ashford). Visit [www.stresslane.com](http://www.stresslane.com).*

**ACTION:** Confront problems appropriately.

## SOCIAL • OBSERVATION

# Be a Better Observer

You'll have a more fulfilled life!



by Bob Davies

**O**NE SUCCESS TRAIT OF ELITE performers is the ability to observe at Level III.

**Level I observation is an awareness that is directed on yourself.** You pay attention only to aspects of the environment that impact you. How do you feel? What moods are you experiencing? How is your physiology? How are your hopes and dreams doing?

This observation is limiting in terms of your ability to have an impact as a leader.

**Level II observation is primarily focused on the other person.** What do you need? What are you experiencing? This observation is useful, but does not produce optimum performance.

**Level III is the peak performance observation where you are aware and observing every aspect of your presence.** You are aware of what's happening personally, of what's going on with the other person and have an intuitive sense of what's happening around you.

You only get to level III through intention—on-purpose listening and observation of everything around you. Of course, you can only focus on one thing at a time, but your intention to be aware of all aspects of your surroundings creates Level III observation.

For example, as a pilot, I recall that

on one flight I was getting poor climb performance—about half of what I expected. Then I noticed I forgot to raise the landing gear! As soon as I removed the drag, my performance improved dramatically.

## Apply This Concept

I invite you to apply this concept.

**Start with a Level I observation.**

Where is the drag in your life that you can control? Are you overweight? Do you have a cluttered desk? Are you a loner? What habits do you need to eliminate, or create? Make a specific commitment for the week and add accountability with a consequence for non-performance. Over time, this will

create or eliminate the habit.

**Next, make a Level II observation.** How are you around other people? What impact are you having when you interact with others? Who needs your attention within your center of influence? How can you cause improvement in the lives of others?

**Level III asks a different question:**

What shift in your mindset or behavior will have the most profound impact? How can you be the source of positive outcomes in your interactions? For each interaction, you earn a + (positive), a - (negative) or a 0 (neutral). **You can make every interaction a +.** Remove the drag and make every interaction a catalyst for positive outcomes! **PE**

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**ACTION:** Make every interaction a plus.

# Use Your Intuition

Enhance your career success.



by Jon Stetson

ASK ANY SUCCESSFUL PERSON what process he or she uses when making decisions, creating new ideas and strategies or knowing what to say to get people to take action, and the answer you'll hear most often is "intuition." Called by other names, such as "gut feeling," "hunch," or "guess that seems to come out of nowhere," intuition is usually the real explanation for all those "educated guesses" that almost always seem right.

Many people are afraid to trust their intuition. After all, people perceive the business world in black or white, and "hunches" and "guesses" fall into that fuzzy gray area. In reality, though, you use your intuition every day in matters you likely take for granted, such as what tone of voice to use in a particular situation or how close to stand when meeting someone new. Your subconscious processes these decisions at a speed much quicker than any supercomputer ever could. These are your intuitions at work.

In business, using your intuition is most important when you're communicating with others; whether you're addressing people in a staff meeting, talking with a co-worker, or delivering an important message from the podium.

Those you communicate with need to feel that you understand where they're coming from and what challenges they face. If you go into the interaction with a planned "script" of what you'll say or how you'll deliver a certain piece of news, you'll make yourself vulnerable. Sure, you may think that going from point A to B to C seems safe, but the moment someone throws you a curve ball with an unexpected question or statement, you're likely to say the wrong thing and hurt your credibility. In those times, you need to listen to and trust your intuition most.

Using your intuition means you need to throw away the *Management 101* textbook and go with your gut feelings during interactions. Doing so can be scary—there's a risk when you stretch yourself—

but the rewards are enormous. Others get more out of the interaction because they don't have their guard up and are "in the zone" with you. They can sense that you're in touch with their needs, creating a synergy that enables them to understand your message and apply it. When you communicate in a way that gets people to take action, your professional status is greatly elevated.

## Intuition-Honing Techniques

All rewards in life require an investment—you don't get anything for nothing. When it comes to optimizing your intuition, the same holds true. If you are willing to keep an open mind and put forth the time and energy to hone your intuitive skills, you'll find your life to be more focused and successful. These five suggestions will help you tap into your inherent intuition so you can reap all its rewards.

**1. Focus on what you hear.** Using your intuition means paying attention to the things that go on around you. Sadly, many people today are overstressed and over-extended, and as such they simply don't listen. Their minds are racing with so many thoughts that they never really focus on what's going on around them, much less the person or audience they're speaking to. To train

yourself to stay focused and aware of what's going on around you, repeat in your mind what other people are saying. Echo their exact words. This will bring you right into the moment and force you to really listen. After a short while, staying present will become second nature and you'll be one step closer to better utilizing your intuition.

**2. Focus on what you don't hear.** Only about 19 percent of communication between people is what they say. And while words are certainly important, more often the tone, accent or timbre of someone's speech, as well as a person's body language, is a better gauge of what's really going on. Elite gamblers know this fact well. Even if they're dealt a bad hand, after observing their opponents' body language,

they often decide to stay in the game. They tap into their intuition to assess just how bad their cards really are as opposed to their opponents' hand. By doing so, the odds are on their side. Therefore, watch the people you're talking with and observe the subtle clues their body language gives you. How are they standing or sitting? Are they looking at you, or are they focused on something else? Are they yawning or fidgeting? All these are clues—signals to your intuition—of how to respond.

**3. Become a people watcher.** Observe people standing on street corners, when they are stopped from crossing due to traffic. Look at everything about them: their clothes, their demeanor, what they're carrying. Then, try and predict which way they will continue—will they go straight across the street, or are they about to turn and change directions? Also attempt to anticipate what stores or buildings they will enter. Often, people give clues as to their destination, and your intuition can help you pick up on these clues.

**4. Use games as intuition boosting experiences.** Honing your intuition can be as simple as a card game. Remove three playing cards from a deck and lay them face up on a table. Make sure the cards are as different from one another as possible. Ask someone to look at the cards and mentally pick the one that seems most interesting to them. Then you do the same. You'll be surprised how often your intuition will guide you to the same choice. As you get more accurate, increase the number of cards you use. Similarly, when you're in a new restaurant or store, ask someone you're with to look around and mentally focus on something they see. Then you do the same. Again, your intuition will often guide you to the same choice.

**5. Use every day as an intuitive challenge.** Intuition is not a "soft" topic that has no place in the "real" world. In fact, intuition is one of the most powerful tools you have to get ahead, gain credibility, and motivate others to take action. Remember that other people can be a rich source of "hidden" information.

You can increase your awareness of things around you when you practice these intuition-honing exercises. The more you invest in your intuition, the more you trust yourself in any situation—becoming confident in every decision you make and interaction you have. **PE**

*Jon Stetson is an intuitionist, providing intelligent, interactive entertainment experiences that connect mind, mirth and mystery. Visit [www.JonStetson.com](http://www.JonStetson.com).*

**ACTION:** Use your intuition in your work.

# Take Ownership

Hold yourself accountable.



by Dennis R. Deaton

ONE CHARACTERISTIC OF high achievers is their ability to hold themselves accountable. They have an Ownership Spirit, the counterpoint to victim-thinking. When you think like a victim, you take the bumps and jolts of life as personal affronts. Disappointing events don't just happen, they seem to happen to you, and in victim mode you tend to find a scapegoat—someone to blame: perhaps even blaming God or life.

When you think in Owner terms, you live independent of circumstance. The ups and downs of the day don't define who you are, your mood, demeanor, or commitment. When something goes awry, you can be disappointed and frustrated, but you don't have to find someone to blame or resent. You focus your thinking on what to do—what options you have and what courses of action would be most constructive.

Many times each day, you and I stand at the crossroads of choice. At those split-second intersections, we make one fundamental decision: we choose to respond as an Owner or react as a Victim. The more we're aware of this, the more we can choose the superior benefits that Ownership Spirit offers us.

This crucial distinction derives its power from the reality of who we are—our ultimate essence at the core level: We each *have* a body, but we are not our bodies. We *have* emotions, but we are not our emotions. We *have* feelings, but we are not our feelings. At the core, we are *the thinker of thoughts*, and what we choose to think has everything to say about the quality of life we experience.

On the core level, as *the thinker of thoughts*, you have the ability to step outside of your thinking and look back into that thinking to examine it, sort through options, and make judgments. You have the ability to take Ownership of the thinking process itself, and everything that flows out of it. You can assess where each line of thinking will take you, and you can consider whether or not you want the consequences. In those moments, you are free to choose any of a vast array of options. The choice is yours alone. You alone are responsible for the outcomes. There is no place to

hide. You are the sole selector of your emotions, your feelings, your actions, and the biochemical implications on your body. Owning that truth is the key to changing everything else.

Suppose, for example, you receive an e-mail from your boss informing you of a change in your schedule. If the e-mail isn't worded to your liking, you may feel a sudden surge of resentment. If you choose to take the path of least resistance and go with the resentment, the veins in your neck bulge, the arteries constrict, your heart pounds wildly, and your blood pressure goes sky high. You have a full-blown case of upset going because, in the moment of decision, you chose upset—and your body obediently followed suit. All the while, you are excusing yourself from responsibility, telling yourself that the

boss is at fault for being such an inconsiderate power freak. However, at the decision point, you could have taken Ownership and opted for a different response, and the stream of ensuing events within your body would have been different.

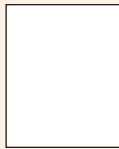
I invite you to evaluate your thoughts when you feel angry or depressed. Consider the possibility that your emotional state at that moment has little to do with the circumstances but is due to your interpretation of the circumstances—that the situation is not causing your anger but that *you* are causing the anger. Think about your thinking. PE

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**ACTION:** Take ownership of your choices.

# Be Effectively Nice

You have the right to choose.



by Charles C. Manz, Russ C. Edelman & Timothy R. Hiltabiddle

BEING TOO NICE CAN BE A PROBLEM! Authentic nice acts can be helpful; however, being *too nice*—the nice guy syndrome (NGS)—can create many problems for you, both personally and professionally.

NGS is a condition that many people experience when they are “overly nice,” more concerned about pleasing others instead of doing the right thing and ensuring that their own interests are considered and protected.

The solution to being *too nice* is not to get tough, but to redefine what *nice* means.

*The old view of nice* sows the seeds of NGS: a conditioned well-intentioned approach to relationships that's built on always trying to please others, treating others “well” by giving away your personal power, valuing agreeableness over assertiveness, prioritizing catering to the demands and wants of others over truthfulness and authenticity, and trying to avoid and minimize disagreement, conflict, and discomfort.

**Here's our new definition of nice:** a constructive and chosen approach to relationships founded on optimizing outcomes

for ourselves and others, balancing assertiveness with cooperation to achieve a spirit of collaboration, honoring the value and strength of others and ourselves, seeking optimal outcomes for everyone involved by emphasizing truthfulness and authenticity, and openly confronting challenges and disagreements and embracing the innovation-promoting benefits of constructive idea conflict.

This view of *nice* enables Nice Guys to avoid being *too nice*. Herb Kelleher, former CEO of Southwest Airlines, notes: “The notion of nice remains the focal point. Never should leaders endure or endorse SOB-like behavior as a remedy for NGS.” A healthy balance combines *authentic niceness* with *appropriate assertiveness*.

As a nice guy, you have the right to: **Be self-aware**—know your strengths and weaknesses; **Speak up**—express your opinions; **Set boundaries**—set clear and appropriate boundaries; **Confront**—confront issues directly and fearlessly; **Choose**—make choices

without guilt; **Expect results**—hold yourself and others accountable; **Be bold**—take chances and push the envelope; and **Win**—finish first fairly.

Balanced niceness (being effectively nice) is founded on truthfulness, collaboration, assertive cooperation, and choosing to do what is most needed (not what seems “nice” in the short run) for healthy long-term success. PE

Russ C. Edelman, Timothy R. Hiltabiddle, and Charles C. Manz are coauthors of *Nice Guys Can Get the Corner Office (Portfolio)*. Visit [www.cavehenricks.com](http://www.cavehenricks.com).

**ACTION:** Be authentically nice.

# Hot Exercise Tips

*Eight ways to safely work out.*



by Thomas B. Gilliam

WHETHER THE WEATHER IS hot or cold, rain or shine, you can safely work out outside. You can go on your daily walk or run—no need to let less-than-ideal climate conditions prevent you from completing your rounds!

Just make sure you stay safe! *Hot weather workouts come with their challenges, but they are worth the efforts. Stay safe while you're sweating through the heat.* Whether you walk, run, hike, bike, or pursue some other form of physical activity, you must take safety precautions on hot days. You know that you need to drink more water, but you are likely not doing all you need to do.

The American College of Sports Medicine issued a position statement on *Exercise and Fluid Replacement*, detailing the proper rehydration of the body while performing physical activity in hot conditions. These precautions apply to anyone who exercises or works in heat.

Here are eight insights and tips for exercising in the heat:

**1. Know the frightening facts about dehydration.** Anyone can get dehydrated, but children, women, and older and overweight individuals are particularly susceptible. When you exercise, you sweat, and sweat is the loss of fluid and many electrolytes critical to normal physiological function: potassium, sodium, calcium, and chloride, for instance. Dehydration is extremely dangerous. The worst-case scenario is heat stroke. If left untreated, heat stroke can lead to death. But there are other concerns—such as muscle cramping and the breakdown of muscle tissue.

**2. Do regular hydration checks.** Don't just assume you're hydrated enough simply because you aren't feeling particularly thirsty. It is quite possible to be dehydrated and have *no* discernible thirst. You should regularly monitor your hydration status (and that of your kids) in two ways: 1) urine assessment: If the volume of urine is diminished and is a deep yellow, you are either dehydrated or becoming dehydrated; and 2) weight check: during extreme temperatures, weigh yourself daily. A loss of more than 2 percent of your body weight following an exer-

cise routine is a loss of fluid. (Yes, you may be trying to lose weight, but it takes time to lose "fat weight." It will happen gradually, not suddenly, even in the heat.) If the "fluid weight" is not replenished before your next exercise routine, you are more susceptible to dehydration. So, don't return to the exercise routine until your body weight returns to the pre-exercise level.

This is important for young athletes participating in fall sports with summer drills and pre-season games. Weigh your child each morning. If a weight loss occurs right after a workout, your child is becoming dehydrated, and you should keep him or her out of the activity until the weight returns.

**3. Drink up!** Drink plenty of fluids



before, during, and after your exercise. If you are training in extreme heat, a sports drink might be appropriate because of the electrolytes it contains. However, if you're a casual walker, drink water. There *are* calories in sports drinks, and the calories expended in your walk could be less than the calories consumed from the sports drink! Drink about 16 ounces of fluid just before your workout, then drink small quantities during your workout, and another 16 ounces after your workout. Your body does not monitor thirst well—that is why you need to consume the fluids, even if you are not thirsty.

**4. If you must have a sports drink, cut it in half.** If you consume a sports drink, dilute it with half water. The sugar in the sports drink may slow the reabsorption of fluid back into the digestive tract. This is especially important with children, and they're the ones who usually beg for the sports drink. Adding water also reduces the number of calories consumed. Eating plenty of

fruits and vegetables will provide you all the electrolytes lost during exercise. Many processed foods contain lots of sodium and chloride. So, the average person doesn't need sports drinks at all.

**5. Lay off caffeine and alcohol.** You may be tempted to drink coffee to get revved up for your morning run, or to enjoy cold beer when you're painting your house on a hot day. Avoid the temptation. Caffeine and alcohol may hinder fluid retention or rehydration. Avoid drinks and foods containing these substances when you're working out—or just plain *working*—in the heat.

**6. Be careful not to over hydrate.** It is possible to drink too much water. Endurance athletes in particular need to be careful about over hydrating. They're susceptible to a disorder called hyponatremia, which is a severe dilution of the sodium in your body that can lead to death. This does not occur often, but it illustrates why you don't want to go to extremes with fluid replacement.

**7. Yes, it's hot—but it's never too hot for your bike helmet!** No matter how sweaty it makes your hair, you can't go bareheaded when you're on a bike. It's just too risky. Try an early morning or late evening ride when temperatures are more pleasant. And no matter how much they whine, don't let kids ride without the helmet, even "just this once."

**8. Don't soak up too many rays.** Give careful thought to what you wear when you exercise in heat. On one hand, you want to expose as much skin as is possible (and decent) to accelerate heat loss. On the other, you don't want to get too many harmful UVA and UVB rays. Choose white or light-colored clothing because it repels the heat, and protect your skin with sunblock and your eyes with a good pair of sunglasses.

Don't let these precautions scare you away from summer exercise. All the hot-weather worries in the world pale in comparison to the health benefits you're reaping from regular physical activity.

Regular exercise keeps your weight at a healthy level, and helps prevent high blood pressure, heart disease, and other serious health issues. But you have to make it a part of your everyday lifestyle. You don't get summers off! So even if you have to alter your routine—moving indoors to a fitness center or even joining the mall walkers in air-conditioned comfort—do it. Once you lose momentum, it's hard to get it back. **PE**

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**ACTION:** Observe these tips when exercising in heat.

# Gym Gems

Learn these lessons.



by Barry Eisen

I'VE BEEN A GYM RAT ALL MY life. Going to the gym at least five days per week whether I'm in L.A. or out of town is simply what I do. Here are some observations I've made. Even if you don't exercise, these tips might work for you:

**Gym:** Have a better attitude before you begin, and you will have a better workout. Endorphins make the miles go faster and the weights lighter. **Life:** Going into a sales presentation or a test with positive anticipation enables you to perform at higher levels.

**Gym:** When someone is using a mirror for focus or to see their posture, have the courtesy to not walk between them and the mirror and break the train of thought. **Life:** When someone in the office is "on a roll" or a friend has created a great relationship, be supportive or at least get out of the way and shut up.

**Gym:** Use a towel to clean the bench after you sweat on it. It's your responsibility. **Life:** When you make a mistake, apologize. It's the right thing to do.

**Gym:** Re-rack your weights when you're done with them. Don't leave your mess for someone else. **Life:** When you make a mess, clean it up. Don't make someone else have to see or deal with it.

**Gym:** Keep loud grunting sounds to a minimum. **Life:** Keep the loud grunting sounds to a minimum.

**Gym:** When lifting, focus on the muscles you are isolating. Concentrate and see them and feel them exerting.

**Life:** Be in the moment. Concentrate on what you're doing. Pay attention.

**Gym:** Spot people who ask for help. You don't lift the weight for them; you let them exert themselves to their maximum and add your vocal and physical support to facilitate their growth. **Life:** Show the way if you know it, but let the discovery, wonder, and growth be experienced by the other person.

**Gym:** Read body language to get a sense of whether a workout partner is time-constrained and wants less conversation. **Life:** Read the body language of others. Since most communication is non-verbal, you need to see, hear, and feel an experience or encounter. Don't make assumptions; ask clarifying questions if you find a disparity between the words you hear and the message you feel.

**Gym:** At the time you are experiencing the greatest muscle exhaustion, you are gaining the greatest results. Stay with it a little longer. You can lift and do more with more ease the next time. **Life:** When you're frustrated and feel you are at the end of your patience or abilities, stick with it a little longer.

**Gym:** Vary your workout every few weeks by using barbells, dumbbells and machines to boost mental interest and to develop greater strength by stimulating muscles from different angles. Set goals and achieve them. **Life:** Learn something new periodically, go someplace interesting, or set goals bigger than your present abilities to create interest and growth. Take a risk occasionally. Do interesting things—you'll be more fun to be around.

**Gym:** Pay your dues and get your money's worth. Make your time count.

**Life:** Show up, pay attention, take positive action. Make your life count.

**Gym:** Take a shower! **Life:** Shower!

**Gym:** Ready! Set! Go! Warm up and stretch before you go all out. **Life:** Warm up and stretch by planning strategy, acquiring skills, and sharing a vision before engaging in activity. Create a relaxed state of mind to envision a better future.

**Gym:** Don't get stuck in a rut. **Life:** To get unstuck and create momentum, let your creative thoughts flow—let feelings, images, or sounds happen as if you're watching a movie. As in your dreams, the pictures may come as metaphors, or symbols. Think about these to gain fresh options or perspectives. **PE**

Barry Eisen is the founder and president of D.E.I. Call 818-769-4300 or visit [www.BarryEisen.com](http://www.BarryEisen.com).

**ACTION:** Apply physical lessons to your life.

## PHYSICAL • HEALTH

# Your Health Status

Take four tests to assess it.

by Anthony Martin

YOU AND I NEED TO SHIFT our attention away from our current system of disease care toward preventive care.

Physicians are good at taking care of us once we get sick; but we need to focus more on keeping healthy.

### Simple Tests Can Save You

I've developed a system of testing biomarkers in the body that also work as early detectors of a pre-disease state. These simple tests can save your life. So, take them:

**Test 1: Free radical.** A simple urine test that costs about \$25 will determine if your

body's cells are aging prematurely. If you cut an apple in half, you see the effects of oxygen as the apple turns brown rapidly. Put a little lemon juice on the apple (the juice contains Vitamin C), and the apple will stay white much longer. Vitamin C is an antioxidant. By testing for free radicals, you can learn the antioxidant level in your tissue. Low antioxidant levels have dire effects, including a high risk for cardiovascular disease and cancer.

**Test 2: CRP.** C-Reactive protein is a blood test (costs about \$25) to determine if your body has a silent inflammatory response. Years ago, researchers observed that people suffering with

rheumatoid arthritis were 50 percent more likely to have a heart attack. Thus the inflammatory-cardiovascular link. Medical thinking sees cholesterol as a major culprit in cardiovascular disease. This puzzles me since 50 percent of all victims of a heart attack have normal cholesterol levels. Inflammation is often the real culprit in cardiovascular problems—and in 30 percent of all cancers. Inflammation can be caused by the use of chemicals in the form of glues, adhesives, pesticides, cleaning products.

**Test 3: PH and Saliva test.** This test cost pennies and can be done at home simply by spitting on a Ph strip. Ideal Ph is around 7.3. Anything under 6.5 is too acidic, and your body is heading toward disaster. The Ph level of most cancer patients is highly acidic. Why? Cancer needs an acidic environment to proliferate. Acidity also corrodes blood vessels, making you more susceptible to cardiovascular disease.

**Test 4: Fatigue.** Fatigue is an early warning signal that your body is breaking down and heading toward disease—especially cancer and cardiovascular disease. Fatigue signals that the body is in a state of imbalance. Don't assume prolonged fatigue is normal. People who have fatigue that lasts past six weeks also test positive for excessive free radicals, inflammation, and acidic Ph.

These four tests put the power of prevention into your hands. **PE**

Anthony Martin, M.D., is ???.

**ACTION:** Test your health regularly.

# Abundance Mentality

*It leads to an abundant reality.*



by Wayne Dyer

**T**HE ENERGY THAT CREATES worlds is within you. It works through attraction and energy. Everything vibrates; everything has a vibratory frequency. You can tune into the abundance mentality by taking these 10 steps:

**1. See the world as an abundant, providing, friendly place.** When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change. When you see the world as abundant and friendly, your intentions are genuine possibilities. They will, in fact, become a certainty, because your world will be experienced from the higher frequencies. In this first step, you are receptive to a world that provides rather than restricts. You see a world that wants you to be successful and is abundant, rather than one that conspires against you and suffers from scarcity.

**2. Affirm: I attract success and abundance into my life because that is who I am.** This puts you into vibratory harmony with your Source. Your goal is to eliminate any distance between what you desire and that from which you pull it into your life. Abundance and success aren't out there waiting to show up for you. You are already it! The Source can only provide you with what it is, and, consequently, what you are already.

**3. Stay in an attitude of allowing.** Resistance is disharmony between your desire for abundance and your beliefs about your ability or unworthiness. Allowing means a perfect alignment. An attitude of allowing means that you ignore efforts by others to dissuade you. It also means that you don't rely on your previous ego-oriented beliefs about abundance being a part of or not a part of your life. In an attitude of allowing, all resistance in the form of thoughts of negativity or doubt are replaced with simply knowing that you and your Source are one and the same. Picture the abundance you desire freely flowing directly to you. Refuse to do anything or have any thought that compromises your alignment with Source.

**4. Use your present moments to activate thoughts that are in harmony with the seven faces of intention—creativity, kindness, love, beauty, expansion, abundance, and peaceful receptivity.**

The key phrase here is *present moments*. Notice *right now*, in this moment, if you're thinking that it's hopeless at this stage of your life to change the thoughts that comprise your belief system. Do you defeat yourself with thoughts of having had such a long life practicing affirmations of scarcity and creating resistance to your success and abundance that you don't have enough time left to counterbalance the thoughts that comprise your belief system?

Choose to let go of that lifetime of beliefs, and begin activating thoughts rights now that allow you to feel good. Say *I want to feel good* whenever anyone tries to convince you that your desires are futile. Say *I want to feel good* when you're tempted to return to low energy thoughts of disharmony with intention.

Eventually your present moments will activate thoughts that make you feel good, and this is an indicator that you're reconnecting to intention. Wanting to feel good is synonymous with wanting to feel God. Remember, "God is good, and all that God has created is good."

**5. Initiate actions that support your feelings of abundance and success.** Here, the key word is *actions*. I've been calling this *acting as if or thinking from the end* and then acting that way. Put your body into a gear that pushes you toward abundance and feeling successful. Act on those passionate emotions as if the abundance and success you seek is already here. Speak to strangers with passion in your voice. Answer the telephone in an inspired way. Do a job interview from the place of confidence and joy. Read the books that mysteriously show up, and pay close attention to conversation that seem to indicate you are being called to something new.

**6. Remember that your prosperity and success will benefit others, and that no one lacks abundance because you opt for it.** The supply is unlimited.

The more you partake of the universal generosity, the more you will have to share with others. In writing this book, wonderful abundance has flowed into my life in many ways. Even more significantly, editors and graphic designers, truck drivers who deliver the book, auto workers who build the trucks, farmers who feed the workers, and bookstore clerks all receive abundance because I've followed my bliss.

**7. Monitor your emotions as a guidance system for your connection to the universal mind of intention.** Strong emotions, such as passion and bliss, are indications that you're connected to Spirit, or *inspired*. When you're inspired, you activate dormant forces, and the abundance you seek in any form comes streaming into your life. When you're experiencing low-energy emotions of rage, anger, hatred, anxiety, and despair, that's a clue that while your desires may be strong, they're completely out of sync with the field of intention. Remind yourself in these moments that you want to feel good, and see if you can activate a thought that *supports* your feeling good.

**8. Become as generous to the world with your abundance as the field of intention is to you.** Don't stop the flow of abundant energy by hoarding or owning what you receive. Keep it moving. Use your prosperity in the service of others, and for causes greater than your ego. The more generous you are, the more you'll stay in vibratory harmony with the all-giving Source.

**9. Devote time to meditate on the Spirit within as the source of your success and abundance.** There is no substitute for the practice of meditation. This is particularly relevant with abundance. You must have an understanding that your *consciousness of the presence* is your supply. By repeating the sound that is in the name of God as a mantra, you are using a technique for manifesting as ancient as recorded history.

**10. Develop an attitude of gratitude for all that manifests into your life.** Be thankful and filled with awe and appreciation, even if what you desire hasn't arrived yet. Look on even the darkest days of your life with gratitude. Everything coming from Source is on purpose. Be thankful while empowering your reconnection to that form from which you and all else originated.

Tune into the abundance mentality—God's frequency—since God can provide you with every blessing in abundance! **PE**

Wayne Dyer is the author of *The Power of Intention* (Hay House). Visit [www.drwaynedyer.com](http://www.drwaynedyer.com).

**ACTION:** Practice the abundance mentality.

# Secrets of Money

Become financially literate.



by Braun Mincher

WHAT DO PEOPLE WANT more than love, respect, or good looks? Money.

We believe money is the key to happiness. While I agree that financial security contributes to a balanced and fulfilled life, money alone can't buy the perfect life. Once you have enough money to meet basic needs, incremental increases have little effect on your happiness. But, money does provide you with options and opportunities.

What amazes me is how little people know when it comes to getting their share of money. We just expect it to be given to us. But lottery winnings, windfall inheritances and "straight to the top" IPOs are rare. For most of us, wealth takes hard work, calculated risks, some time, and financial literacy.

A few years ago, I was in the position financially to retire at age 30. I started with nothing and dropped out of college. But, I became financially literate at a young age, and used that education to achieve financial success.

I learn more from my failures. Each time I make a mistake, it cost me time or money, and I'd be smarter next time.

Most parents today don't teach their children about personal finance, and only nine states require any financial education to be part of the curriculum.

You need to accept personal responsibility for your financial education, and impart basic financial knowledge to those you care about. There is no shortage of books, videos, seminars and resources on the subject. I offer an online financial literacy quiz for free. If you can't "pass" with a score of at least 75 percent, consider this a wake-up call.

## Four Life Skills

To achieve financial security in your life, start exercising these skills:

**1. Get financially literate.** One clear difference between "haves" and "have nots" is their level of financial literacy. The people with money usually have basic financial knowledge—and exercise it. Financial literacy is the foundation of financial success. Read a book, take a class or ask a trusted advisor for help. Turn to an attorney, accountant, or financial planner when you have specific or complex questions, but you should

understand the basics of credit, real estate, mortgages and loans, insurance, taxes, savings, and estate planning.

**2. Live within your means.** We've become a society of hyper consumers, wanting bigger and better of everything, whether we can afford it or not. As families are shrinking, house sizes are exploding, and people are continuing to spend money they do not have to buy things they can't afford.

**3. Start early.** Thanks to compounding, time is very important to achieving financial success. Look at graphs that show total savings over time, say 10 to 30 years. During the later years, you will see exponential growth. Each

day you procrastinate saving for your future is a day lost; in the long run, it may cost you thousands of dollars.

**4. Save consistently.** Just as you may now have your paycheck automatically deposited into your bank account, and your bills automatically withdrawn, you can "pay yourself first" by having a set amount transferred into a savings or investment account each month.

Nobody can look out for your financial well-being better than you can! PE

*Braun Mincher is the award-winning author of The Secrets of Money and the creator of FinancialLiteracyQuiz.com. Visit [www.BraunMincher.com](http://www.BraunMincher.com).*

**ACTION:** Apply these four principles of finances.

# Financial Excellence

Imitate a great role model.



by Tom Peters

THE SIMPLE CONCEPT OF imitating excellence is one you can easily test for yourself. Find an excellent role model, either a person or company, analyze what makes them successful, and relate their methods to you and your needs.

## Four Principles of Imitation

You can learn valuable lessons in the pursuit of excellence from observing other people from a distance—as long as you bear these four principles in mind:

**1. Excellent financial results can't be equated with personal excellence:** results may not last, and may not spring from superior management.

**2. Your observations should relate to your needs and circumstances:** avoid following

courses of action that add no value to your life or business.

**3. Shun lip-service.** Methods that suit you and your business should be sought out, adopted, and adapted.

**4. Any remedy is only good for as long as it works:** do not become slavishly committed to one thing for ever.

## Eight Attributes of Success

The eight attributes of success serve as a valuable checklist and translate into penetrating personal questions:

- What's the time-lag between your confronting an issue and reaching a decision, and what is the lag between having made the decision and taking action?
- Do you use the fewest possible peo-

ple for the highest possible output in the most effective possible set-up?

- Are you in regular, personal contact with customers, and do you use the contact to increase their satisfaction?
- Do you manage people policies in to boost productivity and employee and customer satisfaction?
- Do you delegate fully and effectively, allowing your people the freedom to do their best work?
- Do you have one guiding principle?
- Do you concentrate on what you are really good at?
- Do you keep tight control over the "housekeeping", while allowing plenty of latitude in creative work?

Look at your "no" answers and consider how you can change the negatives to positives.

## Five Financial Questions

None of the eight attributes refers to financial results directly. Financial results are a product of your performance.

Asking and answering five financial questions will give you vital indicators of how

you are performing: 1) Am I creating wealth? 2) How highly do investors (or supporters) rate my enterprise or company? 3) How efficiently am I investing capital? 4) How well am I using money and resources? 5) How effectively am I managing costs and revenues—and the gap between them?

Balance is key. You can have excellent results on all five counts while managing poorly in some areas, but you're not managing well if your answers to the five questions are negative. The product of excellence is excellent results—financial and non-financial. PE

*Tom Peters is the author of Achieving Excellence. Visit [www.tompeters.com](http://www.tompeters.com).*

**ACTION:** Achieve financial excellence.

# Difficult Coworkers

Learn to work harmoniously.

by Robert Orndorff and Dulin Clark

**E**STABLISHING POSITIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS, historically, has taken a backseat to intellectual ability, technical competence, and field-specific knowledge. Until recently, employers mostly interpreted team building, open communication, morale, empathy, tact, and diplomacy as “soft skills.”

Today, we know that “problem employees” contribute to a negative culture and constrain productivity.

Often your biggest problem at work is dealing with difficult coworkers and bosses. If you learn how to work harmoniously with a *Pain in the Ass* (PITA), and the PITA becomes less of a PITA, your life and work will be better.

Let’s look at three common types of PITAs at work and some suggestions for dealing with them (or mitigating these tendencies in yourself).

**1. Crusty PITAs.** Crusty PITAs are negative, cynical, mean-spirited, grouchy, and pessimistic. They’re not amused by attempts at raising morale; they’d rather complain. How do you deal with them? Don’t take their rants to heart. Don’t encourage them—a slight smirk might be all that they need to keep blasting away. Don’t write them off—avoiding Crusty PITAs will only alienate them further. Pick your battles—it’s not your responsibility to shape their behavior. Assess the impact of each incident and decide whether it’s worth escalating it. Confront them individually—when faced head-on, their crust crumbles. Be respectful; don’t make them defensive.

If you have Crusty PITA tendencies, try these four ideas: 1) Determine when you are likely to be crusty—increase your awareness of situations that bring out the crust in you; 2) Soften your crust by making an adjustment in crusty situations to behave or interact more positively. For example, if you tend to “hit below the belt” when debating colleagues, consider how you could argue in a way that gets your point across strongly without offending others. 3) Have your “crust antenna” up—heighten awareness of crusty situations, recognize when you’re getting worked up,

and catch yourself before you throw your crust around. And 4) Keep work in perspective—save your emotional energy for your family and friends.

**2. Overstuffed PITAs.** Overstuffed PITAs are coworkers or bosses who are self-absorbed, attention-hungry, conceited, and self-promoting at the expense of others. They’re not team players; hence, they have a tough time getting anyone to respect or follow them.

How do you cope with such “tone-deaf” people? First, knowing that they are likely insecure can help you keep in perspective the perceived threat to your self-esteem. Don’t react angrily. Although you may want to retaliate by belittling the Overstuffed PITA, that’s the opposite of what you should do.

Instead, help her salvage her self-esteem by approaching specific concerns assertively, calmly, and in a way that doesn’t threaten her self-esteem.

- *Give specific, current feedback.* Address particular, recent situations and behaviors that are hampering the team, such as monopolizing a meeting.
- *Be ready for a negative response:* No matter how skilled you are as a sensitive provider of delicate feedback, the Overstuffed PITA will be defensive.

If your coworkers perceive you as an Overstuffed PITA, be patient in your drive to be the best. If you pursue your goals with dedication, commitment, and character, success will come in time. You don’t have to overshadow others.

- *Replace the need for external praise with your own internal praise.* Develop internal ways of knowing that you are doing an okay job, that you possess unique and special skills, and that you do not necessarily lose when someone else wins.
- *Acknowledge the value in others.* Many people are multi-skilled, capable, and useful, and this does not reduce your

skills, capabilities, and utility. Avoiding becoming an Overstuffed PITA means regularly putting other coworkers, team members, and subordinates ahead of yourself and giving credit to the group before seeking personal recognition.

- *Remember: you are not in this alone.* Think of yourself as a part of a system of personalities that need to blend together in order to achieve a mission.

**3. Sloppy PITAs.** These are coworkers who tends to be disorganized, inattentive to detail, imprecise in work tasks, and “all over the place.” Often this PITA causes resentment among coworkers who must pick up the slack. What can you do with a sloppy coworker?

- *Realize that to some extent, they can’t help it.* Neurological and biological hardwiring are likely at the root of Sloppy PITA behaviors. Approach your PITA with a spirit of empathy rather than blame, irritation, or hostility.

- *Make them aware that they are causing problems for others.* More than likely, the thought hasn’t occurred to them.

- *Approach them collaboratively.* See the Sloppy PITA as a partner in finding a solution rather than as someone who is merely registering a complaint.

- *Remember that different isn’t always bad.* Although the Sloppy PITA might not follow the same rules as more planned, organized thinkers and doers, he or she might be excellent at perceiving whole concepts coming together, in addition to having big-picture vision.

- *Use practical resources.* Proven tried-and-true techniques (such as keeping daily planners, taking detailed notes, and writing outlines) can work well.

If you’re a bit sloppy yourself, you can overcome sloppiness in three ways:

- *Be aware of your sloppy impact.* If you care about what you do in your role, work to become better at areas where you might have sloppy tendencies.

- *Detect your coworkers’ feelings about your behavior.* Notice comments on your skills, even if they are couched in humor. One or two comments might not constitute a problem. Multiple comments are probably signs of a pattern.

- *Borrow best practices.* Consult well-organized people about their best methods for keeping things together and tackling complex tasks.

There’s a constant tension among personality types. The key to making it all run smoothly is resolving to work together toward the ultimate goal. **PE**

*Robert Orndorff, D.Ed., and Dulin Clark, Ph.D. are coauthors of The PITA Principle: How to Work with (and Avoid Becoming) a Pain in the Ass.*

**ACTION:** Apply these tips in dealing with PITAs.

## Communicative Power

Learn lessons from Barack Obama.

by Shelly Leanne

**I**N 2004, BARACK OBAMA TOOK the stage at the Democratic National Convention and moved people with a masterful keynote speech. His oratory strengths have fueled his rapid political ascension—energizing young voters, reinvigorating older ones, expanding the electorate, shattering historic barriers, and clinching the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination.

What makes his words resonate so powerfully? Here are nine lessons:

**1. Use image and body language to make a strong first impression,** starting a two-way dialogue that lays a foundation for commanding authority.

**2. Leverage strong second impressions through voice, intonations, and gestures.** Obama's resonant baritone voice is an asset. He can alter the texture of his tone to become solemn, sad, pulsing with optimism and determination. He can speed or slow his pace, increase his volume, or allow his words to trail off—to earn our trust and confidence.

**3. Break down barriers and build bridges.** He has ways of increasing camaraderie and conveying a sense of shared goals that enables him to transcend traditional divisions of race, ethnicity, age, gender, and religion. Steer attention away from sources of division toward sources of commonalities, promoting a sense that we are on the same team, moving toward shared goals.

**4. Master the art of winning hearts and minds.** Obama's style is to "keep things personal." He skillfully uses pronouns—the "I," "you," and "we" connection—and shares personal experiences at ideal times. He employs details skillfully to express empathy and indicate responsive to audience needs. He creates a one-to-one dialogue that touches the heart.

**5. Convey vision with great efficacy.** When conveying vision, Obama often references history. He knows how to show, not just tell, using vivid language to paint pictures. He draws on symbolism and offers multilayered communication through words rich with corollary meaning. He humanizes ideas, employs backward loops, and recounts anecdotes.

**6. Drive home key points.** Obama promotes most assertively his ideas of greatest priority. He draws on a full range of rhetorical techniques—including

ing *conduplicatio*, *anaphora*, *epistrophe*, *mesodiplosis*, *alliteration*, and *tricolon*—to achieve tremendous impact. Using repetition and parallel paragraph structures help him emphasize key points and build to a crescendo. Alliteration allows him to draw attention to key words.

Rhetorical questions help him focus on key ideas. And, he leverages the "power of three" to underscore key points.

**7. Become skillful in persuading others.** Obama sequences his ideas to convey a sense of logic. He asks and answers—posing non-rhetorical questions and giving well-developed answers. He also addresses key objections—considering counterarguments, clarifying why his ideas are best, and using juxtaposition and antithesis to compare and contrast.

**8. Learn to face controversy.** Whether apologizing for a poor choice of words

or quelling the fire set by the incendiary remarks of Reverend Wright, Obama prevails amid controversy. He uses body language, image, and voice to his advantage, while leveraging props and physical locations to reset his image and reinforce messages. He addresses mistakes and accepts responsibility.

**9. Recognize that strong finishes are indispensable for influencing listeners.** Obama finishes strong by conveying a sense of momentum and urgency, steering listeners to the small actions they can take to help the cause. He builds to a crescendo—a high point—leaving his audiences stirred and inspired with words that linger in their minds. **PE**

*Shel Leanne is President of Regent Crest and author of Say it Like Obama (McGraw-Hill).*

**ACTION:** Improve your persuasive skills.

## PROFESSIONAL • PURPOSE

### Purpose-Centered Work

It generates intrinsic motivation.



by Keith E. Ayers

**W**HAT DIFFERENCE WOULD it make in your work, if you and your colleagues

knew the purpose of your jobs and ensured that everything you do is done with that purpose in mind?

What's the most rewarding aspect of your work? Don't focus exclusively on extrinsic rewards—they cost more and don't increase commitment.

Four intrinsic rewards increase your motivation:

**1. Sense of meaning.** A sense of meaning is strongly influenced by purpose. When you know the purpose of your role and how it contributes to the team, your work is more meaningful. You know what you do is significant. You believe in your product and know that it makes a difference to the people who buy it. To achieve purpose-centeredness in your work, you need to establish your purposes, and regularly assess how well you're fulfilling them. Core values also increase a sense of meaning. You need to know that you are working for an organization that is honest, ethical, and has high standards.

When you operate by your core values, you have greater pride in your work.

**2. Sense of choice.** When people feel they have no choice, they'll either comply or rebel. Self-directed people

believe: "I always have a choice." If you give them no choice, they'll choose anyway—to leave! Giving people a sense of choice means letting them have a say in how things are done and what goals you want to achieve and how you'll achieve them. This increases motivation and commitment. When you give people a sense of choice, they know you trust them, they make more of a contribution, and their passion for their work ignites.

**3. Sense of competence.** When do you feel the most competent? Is it when you are using your talent and skills to do something at which you

excel? Some people feel most competent when they're overcoming challenges or solving problems or energizing others and getting the best performance out of their team. Look for ways to learn and grow, and increase your competence and performance.

**4. Sense of progress.** To achieve high performance, you must have a voice in how you'll be measured. When you set your own goals, you usually set them higher—and you own the goals. When you have input into how you'll be measured, you set the bar higher—and the numbers are *your* numbers.

These four motivators increase the passion you have for what you do by making your work more meaningful. **PE**

*Keith E. Ayers is the author of Engagement is Not Enough (Elevate) and president of Integro Leadership Institute. Visit [www.KeithAyersBriefings.com](http://www.KeithAyersBriefings.com).*

**ACTION:** Engage in purpose-centered work.

# Achieve Your Dreams

And enable the dreams of others.



by Randy Pausch

I HAVE ABOUT 10 CANCEROUS tumors, and the doctors tell me that I have about three months of good health left. That is what it is. I can't change it—I just have to decide how I'll respond. I choose to be cheerful. If I don't seem as depressed or morose as you think I should be, I'm sorry to disappoint you.

Today, my last lecture, I'm going to talk about achieving your childhood dreams—and then enabling others to achieve their dreams.

## Seek to Achieve Your Dreams

As a child, I had dreams—and I have achieved most of them. I was born in 1960. When I was nine years old, I saw men landing on the moon. I thought, "Anything is possible." Never lose sight of the inspiration to dream. Here are six of my childhood dreams:

**Dream 1: Experience zero gravity.** To train astronauts, NASA has the *Vomit Comet*. This thing does parabolic arcs, and at the top of each arc you are weightless for about 25 seconds. They have a program where college students can submit proposals, and if they win the competition, they get to fly in the *Comet*. I put a team together, and they won—and I went with them.

**Dream 2: Play in the National Football League.** I never played in the NFL, but I signed up for football when I was nine years old, the smallest kid in the league. My coach, Jim Graham, was six-foot-four. He'd played linebacker at Penn State. First day he showed up without any footballs and asked us, "How many men are on a football field at a time?" We said, "Eleven on a team, 22 in all." Coach said, "Right, and how many people touch the football at any one time?" "Only one of them." And he said, "Right, so we're going to work on what those other 21 guys are doing."

I learned valuable lessons by playing football—teamwork, sportsmanship, perseverance, sacrifice, fundamentals.

**Dream 3: Author an article for the World Book encyclopedia.** When I was a kid, we had the *World Book* encyclopedia. When I became an authority on virtual reality, I was asked by the people at *World Book* to write an article.

**Dream 4: Be like and meet Captain Kirk.** Captain Kirk of *Starship Enterprise* was everything I wanted to be. He wasn't the smartest guy on the ship, but he was the leader. I learned a lot about how to lead people by watching him. I achieved this dream and met my boyhood idol when Captain James T. Kirk (aka William Shatner) came to me to study our virtual reality setup.

**Dream 5: Win stuffed animals at the amusement park.**

When you're a little kid and you see big buff guys walking around the amusement park with stuffed animals, you want to win one. I have won a lot of stuffed animals for my wife and children.

**Dream 6: Be a Disney Imagineer.** When I was eight years old, our family went to Disneyland. I said, "I want to make stuff like this." When I received my Ph.D. from Carnegie Mellon, I felt qualified to do anything. I dashed off letters of applications to Disney Imagineering, and they sent me some nice rejection letters. That was a setback. But later, I worked on the Aladdin VR Project. Imagineering was everything that I had dreamed. I learned how to put artists and engineers together and later became a consultant for Imagineering on projects like DisneyQuest, the *Virtual Jungle Cruise* and *Pirates of the Caribbean*.

## Enable the Dreams of Others

As you get older, you find that enabling the dreams of others is even more fun than achieving your own.

At Carnegie Mellon, I created a course called *Building Virtual Worlds*. We draw 50 students from different departments to work in teams on two-week projects: they make and show something, and then get three new teammates and do it again (five projects during the semester). The work these students do just blows me away.

We then took it up a notch. We created a dream fulfillment factory or our *Entertainment Technology Center*. It was all about artists and technologists working in small teams to make things.

The ETC was wonderful, but I

wanted something infinitely scalable—to the point where tens of millions of people could chase their dreams. That goal really made me the Mad Hatter. *Alice* is a novel way to teach computer programming to kids. They're learning to program, but they think they're making movies and video games. Over 10 percent of U.S. colleges are using it now.

## 10 Lessons Learned

Here are 10 keys to achieving dreams:

**1. Value the role of parents, mentors, students, bosses.** I had incredible parents and amazing teachers, mentors, friends, colleagues, and bosses.

**2. Have fun.** I'm dying and having fun every day! You just have to decide if you're a Tigger or an Eeyore. Never lose your childlike wonder.

**3. Help others.** Focus on other people, not on yourself. Find the best in people.

**4. Get people to help you.** You can't get there alone. You must get people to help you by telling the truth, being earnest, and apologizing when you screw up.

**5. Benefit from the brick walls.** They are not there to keep you out, but to give

you a chance to show how badly you want something and to stop other people who don't want it badly enough.

**6. Get a feedback loop and listen to it.** When someone tells you what you need to hear, listen to it, thank them, cherish it, and use it.

**7. Show gratitude.** When I got tenure, I took my research team to Disneyworld for a week. One professor said, "How can you afford to do that?" I said, "These people busted their ass and got me the best job in the world for life. How could I not do that?"

**8. Don't complain—just work harder.** Jackie Robinson, the first black major league baseball player, is my hero in this area. It was in his contract not to complain, even when the fans spit on him.

**9. Be good at something—it makes you valuable.** Work hard and become world-class at something. You are then in a position to help others.

**10. Be prepared.** Luck is where preparation meets opportunity. My best opportunities came to me because I was prepared for them.

If you lead your life the right way, the dreams will come to you. PE

Randy Pausch was a professor at Carnegie Mellon. This article is adapted from his Last Lecture on September 18, 2007. Visit [download.srv.cs.cmu.edu/~pausch/](http://download.srv.cs.cmu.edu/~pausch/).

**ACTION:** Achieve dreams and enable those of others.

## Stop Being a Jerk

### Keep the goodwill going.



by Richard Bayer

WE ARE ON THE CUSP OF A *Goodness Revolution.*

As the economy worsens, we reflect on what really matters in life. As we put away our expensive toys and distractions, we notice our inner lives and realize, “We’re all in this together—and we need to be kind to one another.”

It’s not cool to be a jerk. So, stop grasping for success in the *Greed-Is-Good* way. Seek the good life in a kinder, gentler way, working to become a better person and help others do likewise.

Life should be rich and full—and this state of being has little to do with money. Yes, prosperity often flows from goodness, but it’s a byproduct—not a goal in and of itself. Ask yourself, *What kind of person do I really want to be?* You already want to be a good person. It’s just that you get off track and need gentle reminders to refocus and recommit.

### Six Suggestions

What can you do to become a better person? Here are six suggestions:

**1. Learn what love really means and practice it.** We have immature views on love, thinking it’s a feeling, a conditional relationship, or synonymous with good sex. These misunderstandings result in misery. Love means *intending the good of the other*. Relationships based on utility or pleasure are fragile, since the time may come when the other person is no longer useful to you, or no longer pleases you. Examine your motives and ask yourself, *Am I intending the good of the other, or seeking to serve myself?*

**2. Always treat others with dignity.** Protecting human dignity is at the heart of being a good person. All people have six innate characteristics: *spiritual, social, material, free and creative, fragile, and equal*. Seek to acknowledge *all* of these areas in your interactions.

**3. Stop squashing hope in yourself and others—seek to cultivate it.** Do you worry out loud about the economy? Do you make dire predictions? Do you shoot down the ideas and plans of others? You may do these things, without considering that it is incompatible with goodness—but it is. Expressing optimism, even when you are unsure of the outcome, is *not* mindless Pollyannaism. To squelch hope influences people not

to do what they need to do to achieve their dreams. Taking away hope from others harms them—and it harms you.

**4. Be thrifty and generous.** *Thrifty* is not synonymous with *stingy*. Being thrifty is the virtuous middle ground between stinginess and extravagance. It’s a balanced way of living that enables you to help others when they need it.

**5. Awaken your gratitude.** Are you grateful for what you have? If not, you can’t possibly be happy. To realize all that you have, make a “gratitude” list. Say “thank you” to others. Gratitude is a form of courtesy. Ingratitude is rudeness. Speak kind words to and about others. By expressing gratitude daily, you give and gain rewards.

**6. Work toward your goals.** Not having goals (or having them and not working toward them) harms your physical and mental health. So, have a vision, set some goals, and take steps—starting now—to meet them. When you know what you want, you see other things as distractions or temptations. Get in touch with your aspirations, and pursue goals that are most meaningful to you.

When you decide to become a better person, you get an immediate surge of happiness and validation, and others respond. Goodness begets goodness. PE

*Dr. Richard Bayer is COO of The Five O’Clock Club, a career coaching organization, and author The Good Person Guidebook. Visit [www.fiveoclockclub.com](http://www.fiveoclockclub.com).*

**ACTION:** *Enjoy the journey of goodness.*

## SERVICE • STANDARDS

### Stand for the Best

#### Serve with a sense of calling.

by Tom Bloch

WHEN I DROPPED OUT OF corporate life to do something tougher and

more fulfilling—going from a corporate CEO to an inner-city classroom teacher—I learned some hard truths but also discovered wondrous joys.

Those of us who are blessed with plenty must now serve the country that has given us so much. This is not a “do as I say, not as I do” challenge. In 1992, I took over as CEO of H&R Block—the tax preparation firm co-founded by my father—making close to \$1 million a year. But wealth and power came with a price, and soon I felt the strain. I wanted my one-and-only life to make a real difference.

In 1995, after 19 years at H&R Block, I resigned and started teaching middle school math in urban Kansas City, and five years later, I co-founded University Academy, a college prep charter school that reaches 1,000 underprivileged kids (in five years, all but two of our graduates have gone on to attend college).

When I changed my direction and became a teacher, I learned these lessons:

- **Urban education lies at the heart of our most urgent national problem.** Too many underprivileged children end up like their parents—impoverished, uneducated, and hopeless. This cycle *will* continue unless children value education and have tools they need to succeed.
- **To close the achievement gap, high**

**standards must be set in all schools.** Low standards produce low performance. All schools must set high standards. In urban schools, out of a sense of pity, many kids who don’t achieve academic proficiency are passed from grade to grade. Pity is a dangerous trap. You don’t help kids by feeling sorry for them. It tells them that you expect them to fail.

- **Inner-city teachers can be agents of personal and social transformation.** I try to motivate kids who often live hour to hour and believe they’re a lost cause. It makes me determined to instill hope in them. I know if they believe in themselves, they can succeed.

- **Schools must focus on character education—not just academics.** Schools must teach values. *We must* teach caring, compassion, respect, and responsibility. Character education and academics go hand in hand.

- **Teachers must play a role in students’ lives.** Parental indifference is a dreadful influence. Teachers can help children redirect their lives.

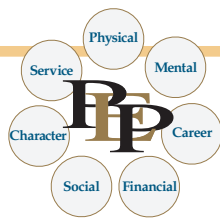
- **When you work at repairing the world, you are repairing yourself.** It took a career change to an underpaid profession to make me truly happy. Money and power don’t make you happy. True happiness comes from serving others.

- **It’s never too late to find your calling.** I feel a calling to teach kids who live in poverty, crime, and hopelessness. It was my most rewarding choice.

While education is my focus, it need not be yours. It’s the desire to serve that counts. If you care enough to make a difference, you can make a difference. PE

*Tom Bloch is author of Stand for the Best (Jossey-Bass/Wiley). Dottie DeHart, PR (828) 325-4966.*

**ACTION:** *Find a way to give back and serve.*



# GOAL GETTERS

as.  
—Michael E. Angier,  
SuccessNet.

as.

—Stephen Bertman, *Eight Pillars of Greek Wisdom*

as.

—Sage Bennet is the author of *Wisdom Walk*

as.

—Lisa Haneberg, author of *Focus Like a Laser Beam*




## Personal COACH



### Time Is Life

*Make it work for you.*

by Rena Reese

**Y**OU GET 1,440 MINUTES EACH DAY TO DIVIDE among the activities you deem important. While you may dream of getting more done, you may not have learned the collateral damage of accomplishing *more*. You may be a raging success in one area of your life, at the expense of your health and relationships.

**First, figure out where your precious time goes.** Identify activities that don't pay off and choose differently—change something if it does not support or reflect your values.

Operate from a place of choice and power.

If you feel crunched by the clock, adding more to the work-load may topple your balancing act. Your *work life* is not your *whole life!* If you crave more time to care for your body, engage with your family and friends, or to learn something new, honor those cravings.

To hone your time allocations so that they represent what you value most and give you desired outcomes, apply these five tips:

**1. Use a measuring stick.** What measuring stick do you use to evaluate the day—money earned, meals prepared, “to-do” list done, a clean home, happy kids, exercising? Decide what is important to you at the start of the day and devote time to achieve these things.

**2. Eat honest pie.** List activities that fill your day. Accurately pie-chart the time you spend doing the items on your list. What activity eats up the most and the least time? Becoming aware of all that fills your day puts you in a position of choice and power.

**3. Eat your pie one slice at a time:** Some pie slices need tweaking. Change one slice this week. Start on the piece that will have the greatest payoff (stop watching late-night TV and waking up *late* and *tired* for work).

**4. Delegate effectively:** Delegate or share minor tasks. Encourage others to contribute in ways that showcase their talents. Involve your kids in the workings of the family. Give them responsibilities as their age dictates. This week, delegate at least three duties.

**5. Think before you “YN.”** When someone asks you to do something, before you respond with a “yes” or “no”, ask: “How will I feel 30 seconds after I commit to this?” If you *think* before you commit, you won't commit to do what you *really* don't want to do.

Invest time and energy in fulfilling your roles and responsibilities in ways that reflect your goals and values. PE

Rena Reese is founder of The Soul Salon and author of The Soul Salon. Visit [www.MySoulSalon.com](http://www.MySoulSalon.com).

**ACTION:** *Manage your time and lead your life.*

## Learn How to Listen

*A brush with death taught me.*



by Doreen Virtue

**I**SUPPOSE EVERYONE DISLIKES being told what to do. However, this trait almost cost me my life. I'd made my own decisions during my career as a psychotherapist, and as a wife and mother. I was free-spirited and independent. Yet, in my quieter moments, I'd hear an inner voice guide me to make positive changes.

For instance, I was guided to eat more healthfully, and to talk about angels in my therapy and writing. Even though I knew this was Divine guidance, I stubbornly resisted. I wanted to make my own decisions, and I didn't trust that it was safe to publicly speak about angels. I didn't recognize that God and the angels were only trying to answer my prayers for greater health and happiness. It took a brush with death before I was humbled enough to realize that God really does know best.

On July 15, 1995, I was preparing to leave for an appointment in Anaheim, California—an hour's drive away. I was alone in my bedroom, and my teenage son, Grant, was reading in his room on the other side of the house.

As I stepped from the bedroom into the bathroom, I heard a loud male voice outside my right ear. "You better put the top up on your car, or it will be stolen."

All of my training had taught me that hearing voices was a sign of auditory hallucinations, but this voice was clear, loving, and firm. I instantly understood the message's meaning. With the top down, my car was eye-catching. The trouble was, the motor that propelled the top was broken, and I didn't know how to hoist the top back into place (and I didn't want to get dirty trying).

"You better put the top up on your car, or it will be stolen," repeated the angel.

"But the top is broken!" I argued.

"Then have Grant put the top up," the voice clearly said. But I was running late, so I chose to ignore that advice, too.

"You better put the top up on your car, or it will be stolen," the angel ominously warned one more time.

As I drove to my appointment, I pondered the message. I wasn't frightened, but I was concerned (my insurance would not replace the car if it was stolen).

But I had doubts. "Who would steal a car on a Saturday afternoon in broad

daylight?" I thought. Besides, my meeting was at a church! To be safe, I prayed, asking for God's protection.

I pulled into the church parking lot and selected a space near the entrance. As I turned to lock the car, I heard a loud male voice behind me: "Give me your car keys and purse right now!"

I turned to face an angry-looking man. He had one hand outstretched, and another hand stuffed inside his shirt. A second man stood next to a car with a running engine, a get-away car.

Then, God answered my prayers for protection. "Scream with all your might, Doreen," the familiar voice counseled. Even though I'd ignored his previous warnings, the angel hadn't abandoned me! This time—perhaps the first time in my life—I followed my angel's guid-

ance and screamed as loud as I could.

My attacker's eyes widened, and he backed away. Meanwhile, a woman sitting in her car noticed the commotion and honked her horn. My screams and the car horn attracted the attention of churchgoers, who rushed outside. The two men jumped into their car and fled.

I dropped to my knees, "Father, thank you for saving my life!" I promised God that I'd never ignore His angels' guidance again. The police later told me that my assailants had car-jacked two cars that day, and were armed with a gun and knife.

It took a near-tragedy to help me commit to following God's guidance. **PE**

*Doreen Virtue, Ph.D., is author of Healing with the Angels. Visit [www.AngelTherapy.com](http://www.AngelTherapy.com).*

**ACTION:** Follow spiritual promptings.

## SPIRITUAL • SIGNALS

### Spiritual Signals

*Confirm your inner voice.*



by Crystal Nani

**S**PIRITUAL MANIFESTATIONS are natural; in fact, you must work diligently to keep your distance from God—and work even harder to ignore the synchronicity and signals put before you to assist your journey, to raise your vibration, heal your conflicts, and promote your spiritual growth.

Once I met a woman who knew what she had to do, but she was scared and conflicted about her major life decision. I suggested she ask for spiritual confirmation. She asked for and immediately received a signal; but apparently, it wasn't *big enough*.

I, too, have asked for a sign and wasn't sure it was a confirmation because my mind tried convincing me it was all a coincidence.

Confirmations can be big or small, serious or funny. You will get what you ask for. The key is to ask for something that will be clear to you.

When you engage in the world outside of the obvious (what you see with your physical eyes), you need to park your logical mind at the door. Be open to all possibilities. You can't listen to your intuition or guidance if your analytical brain insists on years of research studies, or spreadsheets with logical algorithms. How about some old-fashioned faith based on that shiver of

truth that runs through you when you know something deep in your core?

#### Seek Guidance and Confirmation

When you want to confirm your inner voice, you can use signs as a guide.

**1. Be clear.** What would constitute a sign, signal, answer, or confirmation for you?

**2. Be open.** When you ask for a confirmation, be ready and willing to receive an answer. You can't listen if you are too busy logically explaining away the phenomenon.

**3. Be respectful.** Signs are a form of guidance. Don't ask for a signal if you know what you need to do but have already decided not to do it.

**4. Be flexible.** Remember that your prayers and intentions are often answered in unexpected and surprising ways.

**5. Be truthful.** When you get your signal, sit with it. If you are still wondering if it's a confirmation, take a moment to explore why you would want to disprove it.

The purpose of asking for a signal is not to test the system, but to get clarification and guidance. If you feel the need to test the system, feel free to waste valuable time distracting yourself for as long as needed to find out why you don't want confirmation of what you already know you need or want to do. But if you are ready for more spiritual growth and evolution, start asking and start receiving! **PE**

*Christel Nani, RN, spent 16 years as a trauma nurse in New York City's busiest emergency rooms. Now she is a healer, teacher, and author of Sacred Choices: Thinking Outside the Tribe to Heal Your Spirit (Harmony Books). Visit [www.christelnani.com](http://www.christelnani.com).*

**ACTION:** Seek spiritual confirmations.