

Personal Development/Understanding Self

Reflection on Chapters from the “Twelve Pillars” by Jim Rohn and Chris Widener

Rohn’s and Widener’s book, entitled *Twelve Pillars*, tells the story of a man, Michael Jones, who is at a cross roads in his life. By a chance encounter, Michael meets an older gentleman, Charlie, who maintains the home of a very successful Mr. Davis. The book seeks to document the principles and strategies of which have aided Mr. Davis in leading a success. These principles are referred to as the ‘*pillars of success*’, and throughout the story, Charlie shares these gems with a despondent Michael in an attempt to assist him in getting his life back on track.

Chapter Four of *Twelve Pillars*, entitled “*Achieve Your Goals*”, takes place in a diner, where Michael and Charlie met up to catch up. During this encounter, Michael shares with Charlie that he ultimately has no goals and no direction in his life in regards to his aspirations and career. Charlie then proceeds to share with Michael some of the crucial strategies he needs to implement in order to actualize his dreams. Upon reflecting on the content of Chapter Four, I found this chapter of the book to be an excellent representation of how one can practically approach planning and setting their goals. One key takeaway from this chapter is the point emphasized by Charlie, that it is necessary to write your goals down. Charlie went on to explain that documenting your goals not only helps you conceptualize what you want to achieve, but also allows you to take them from thought to reality to make them tangible. As a working student, this was a very important strategy I had to deploy. At times, life becomes very busy and thus it can be difficult to differentiate your wants and your goals. At the start of every year since age thirteen, I have conducted a goal setting exercise. This activity has allowed me to document all the goals I intend to achieve for the upcoming year or years ahead and I found the exercise to be incredibly useful, as it provides an opportunity for me to track my progress throughout the year, as well as help me focus on what it is I have set out to achieve. Another key takeaway I have garnered from this chapter is to categorize my goals. In chapter four, Charlie explains that categorizing your goals is important as it helps you put into perspective which goals is a more immediate focus that will lead to achieving other goals. I find this concept to be very beneficial, especially as a college student, as it will allow me to put into perspective what it is I need to accomplish now (within the next 1 or so), and how accomplishing these goals will bring me closer to accomplishing my dreams and/or actualizing the vision I have set for my life (which may be represented in the form of medium or long term goals).

Chapter Five of *Twelve Pillars*, entitled “*The Proper Use of Time*”, continues in the diner, as Charlie and Michael have a conversation on how one can effectively utilize their time in order to achieve

the many goals they have set. In this chapter, Michael explains that though he would like to redirect his path in life, and focus more on achieving his dreams, he feels that he hasn't the time to do that at this point of his life. He explains that maintaining his family and professional life has consumed him, and as a result he doesn't have enough time to pursue anything else. It is after this explanation that Charlie bestows advice that I have found the most profound in all my readings. Charlie quotes Mr. Davis' words by saying, *"We must all suffer from one of two pains: The pain of discipline or the pain of regret. The difference is discipline weighs ounces while regret weighs tons."* I have found this sentiment to be extremely impactful and will definitely apply it to my life. This chapter has reemphasized the point that achieving your dreams takes sacrifice and dedication. In order for me to achieve my dreams, I must be willing to sacrifice leisure and dedicate myself to actively implementing the necessary steps to accomplish my goals. I also learnt that prioritizing means always making time to work on them, even when you feel like your life is already packed. In applying this, I realize it is crucial for me to shift around some of the things I have committed myself to, in order to better allocate my resources to the goals I have set.

Chapter Six of Twelve Pillars, entitled *"Surround Yourself with the Best People"*, takes place at the Twelve Pillars house, home of Mr. Davis and the place of employment for Charlie. In this chapter, Michael visits Charlie at the house to tell him of all the progress he has made in setting and establishing his goals since the last time they spoke at the diner. Here, Charlie explains another crucial component of success is being mindful of the people who surround you and how their presence in your life affects you. Charlie also emphasizes the words of Mr. Davis, who implores persons to surround themselves with the most positive influences if they aspire to be the best of the best. I found the sentiment to be very impactful. As young people, we can easily be influenced by others around us as we have not yet fully discovered our purpose or established our place in society. Therefore it is key that we ensure the persons we choose to surround ourselves with are persons who will influence us positively and encourage us to work steadfastly on accomplishing our dreams. In applying this takeaway to my life, I will constantly evaluate the persons in my life, their mindset and the direction in which our lives are heading. If these persons are focused on bettering themselves and their lives, those persons will remain part of my circle. However, if an individual/individuals are heading in a direction that is contrary to where I envision my life, I will challenge myself to remove them from my environment as their influence will be detrimental to goals in the long run.

Finally, Chapter Seven of Twelve Pillars, entitled *"Be a Life-Long Learner"*, continues at the twelve pillars house. In this chapter of the book, Charlie begins to explain another pillar of success to Michael, which is the importance of self-education. Here, Charlie explains that while formal education is beneficial, especially in helping one establish their goals and career, one must also place a great

importance on being a life-long learner. This means challenging oneself to learn new things and develop new skill sets even after their formal education has ended. Charlie encapsulates this sentiment through the following quote - *“Formal education will make you a living. Self-education will make you a fortune.”* Ultimately, Charlie emphasizes to Michael that a key determinant of one’s success is their receptiveness to knowledge and their willingness to pursue learning outside of formal education channels. In pursuing a career in information technology, it will be imperative for me to be in constant pursuit of knowledge. This is because Information Technology, like many other areas, is in a constant state of development. There are always new products being invented, which means in order for one to stay competitive, they must keep themselves abreast of the ever changing climate of the digital landscape. In utilizing this takeaway, I will challenge myself to be in constant pursuit of knowledge. Wherever there is an opportunity for me to learn and evolve my skill set, I will seize it in order to maximize my full potential.

In conclusion, the Twelve Pillars effectively highlights and explains strategies which, if utilized properly, can be helpful in assisting one in setting and accomplishing their goals, maximizing on opportunities provided and overall encouraging them to pursue holistic success in every way imaginable. I have no doubts the sentiments I have learnt will be crucial in helping me navigate my life as I prepare to establish myself and identity further afield.