



The Self-improvement Handbook

“The Art and Science of Success Distilled into One Simple But Powerful Life-Changing Guide!”

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Self-improvement & Success – Hand in Hand

Everything that happens to us happens in purpose. And sometimes, one thing leads to another. Instead of locking yourself up in your cage of fears and crying over past heartaches, embarrassment and failures, treat them as your teachers and they will become your tools in both self-improvement and success.

Remember watching Patch Adams? It's one great film that will help you improve yourself. Hunter "patch" Adams is a medical student who failed to make it through the board exams. After months of suffering in melancholy, depression and suicidal attempts – he decided to seek for medical attention and voluntarily admitted himself in a psychiatric ward. His months of stay in the hospital led him to meeting different kinds of people.

Sick people in that matter. He met a catatonic, a mentally retarded, a schizophrenic and so on. Patch found ways of treating his own ailment and finally realized he has to get back on track. He woke up one morning realizing that after all the failure and pains he has gone through, he still want to become a doctor. He carries with himself a positive attitude that brought him self-improvement and success. He didn't only improved himself, but also the life of the people around him and the quality of life. Did he succeed? Needless to say, he became the best damn doctor his country has ever known.

So, when does self-improvement become synonymous with success? Where do we start? Take these tips:

- **Stop thinking and feeling as if you're a failure, because you're not.** How can others accept you if YOU can't accept YOU?
- **When you see hunks and models on TV, think more on self-improvement, not self pitying.** Self-acceptance is not just about having nice slender legs, or great abs. Concentrate on inner beauty.
- **When people feel so down and low about themselves, help them move up.** Don't go down with them. They'll pull you down further and both of you will end up feeling inferior.

- **The world is a large room for lessons, not mistakes.** Don't feel stupid and doomed forever just because you failed on a science quiz. There's always a next time. Make room for self-improvement.
- **Take things one at a time.** You don't expect black sheep's to be goody-two-shoes in just a snap of a finger. Self-improvement is a one day at a time process.
- **Self-improvement results to inner stability, personality development and SUCCESS.** It comes from self-confidence, self appreciation and self-esteem.
- **Set meaningful and achievable goals.** Self-improvement doesn't turn you to be the exact replica of Cameron Diaz or Ralph Fiennes. It hopes and aims to result to an improved and better YOU.
- **Little things mean BIG to other people.** Sometimes, we don't realize that the little things that we do like a pat on the back, saying "hi" or "hello", greeting someone "good day" or telling Mr. Smith something like "hey, I love your tie!" are simple things that mean so much to other people. When we're being appreciative about beautiful things around us and other people, we also become beautiful to them.
- **When you're willing to accept change and go through the process of self-improvement, it doesn't mean that everyone else is.** The world is a place where people of different values and attitude hang out. Sometimes, even if you think you and your best friend always like to do the same thing together at the same time, she would most likely decline an invitation for self-improvement.

We should always remember that there's no such thing as 'over night success'. It's always a wonderful feeling to hold on to the things that you already have now, realizing that those are just one of the things you once wished for. A very nice quote says that, "*When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.*" We are all here to learn our lessons. Our parents, school teachers, friends, colleagues, officemates, neighbors... they are our teachers. When we open our doors for self-improvement, we increase our chances to head to the road of success.

The Importance of Improving Yourself

Sometimes, when all our doubts, fears and insecurities wrap ourselves up, we always come up with the idea of “*I wish I was somebody else.*” More often than not, we think and believe that someone or rather, most people are better than us - when in reality, the fact is, **most people are more scared than us.**

You spot a totally eye-catching girl sitting by herself at a party, casually sipping on a glass of Asti Spumanti. You think to yourself, “she looks so perfectly calm and confident.” But if you could read thru her transparent mind, you would see a bunch of clouds of thoughts and you might just be amazed that she’s thinking “are people talking about why I am seated here alone?... Why don’t guys find me attractive? ...I don’t like my ankles, they look too skinny... I wish I was as intelligent as my best friend.”

We look at a young business entrepreneur and say “*Wooh... what else could he ask for?*” He stares at himself at the mirror and murmur to himself, “I hate my big eyes... I wonder why my friends won’t talk to me... I hope mom and dad would still work things out.”

Isn’t it funny? We look at other people, envy them for looking so outrageously perfect and wish we could trade places with them, while they look at us and thinks of the same thing. We are insecure of other people who themselves are insecure of us. We suffer from low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence and lose hope in self-improvement because we are enveloped in quiet desperation.

Sometimes, you notice that you have an irritating habit like biting off your finger nails, having a foul mouth, and you – of all people, is the last to know.

I have a friend who never gets tired of talking. And in most conversations, she is the only one who seems to be interested in the things she has to say. So all of our other friends tend to avoid the circles whenever she’s around, and she doesn’t notices how badly she became socially handicapped – gradually affecting the people in her environment.

One key to self-improvement is to LISTEN and TALK to a trusted friend. Find someone who you find comfort in opening up with even the most gentle topics you want to discuss. Ask questions like “do you think I am ill-mannered?”, “Do I always sound so argumentative?”, “Do I talk too loud?”, “Does my breath smell?”, “Do I ever bore you when were together?”. In this way, the other person will

obviously know that you are interested in the process of self-improvement. Lend her your ears for comments and criticisms and don't give her answers like "Don't exaggerate! That's just the way I am!" Open up your mind and heart as well. And in return, you may want to help your friend with constructive criticism that will also help her improve her self.

One of Whitney Houston's songs says "*Learning to love yourself is the greatest love of all.*" **True enough!** In order to love others, you must love yourself too. Remember, you cannot give what you do not have.

Before telling other people some ways on how to improve themselves, let them see that you yourself is a representation and a product of self-improvement. Self-improvement makes us better people, we then inspire other people, and then the rest of the world will follow.

Stop thinking of yourselves as second-rate beings. Forget the repetitive thought of "If only I was richer... if only I was thinner" and so on. Accepting your true self is the first step to self-improvement. We need to stop comparing ourselves to others only to find out at the end that we've got 10 more reasons to envy them.

We all have our insecurities. Nobody is perfect. We always wish we had better things, better features, better body parts, etc. But life need not to be perfect for people to be happy about themselves.

Self-improvement and loving yourself is not a matter of shouting to the whole world that you are perfect and you are the best. It's the virtue of acceptance and contentment. When we begin to improve ourselves, we then begin to feel contented and happy.

Building Your Self-Esteem

So how do you stay calm, composed and maintain self-esteem in a tough environment? Here are some tips you may to consider as a starter guide to self-improvement.

Imagine yourself as a Dart Board. Everything and everyone else around you may become Dart Pins, at one point or another. These dart pins will destroy your self-esteem and pull you down in ways you won't even remember. Don't let them destroy you, or get the best of you. So which dart pins should you avoid?

Dart Pin #1 : Negative Work Environment

Beware of “dog eat dog” theory where everyone else is fighting just to get ahead. This is where non-appreciative people usually thrive. No one will appreciate your contributions even if you miss lunch and dinner, and stay up late. Most of the time you get to work too much without getting help from people concerned. Stay out of this, it will ruin your self-esteem. Competition is at stake anywhere. Be healthy enough to compete, but in a healthy competition that is.

Dart Pin #2: Other People’s Behavior

Bulldozers, brown nosers, gossipmongers, whiners, backstabbers, snipers, people walking wounded, controllers, naggers, complainers, exploders, patronizers, sluffers... all these kinds of people will pose bad vibes for your self-esteem, as well as to your self-improvement scheme.

Dart Pin #3: Changing Environment

You can’t be a green bug on a brown field. Changes challenge our paradigms. It tests our flexibility, adaptability and alters the way we think. Changes will make life difficult for awhile, it may cause stress but it will help us find ways to improve our selves. Change will be there forever, we must be susceptible to it.

Dart Pin #4: Past Experience

It’s okay to cry and say “ouch!” when we experience pain. But don’t let pain transform itself into fear. It might grab you by the tail and swing you around. Treat each failure and mistake as a lesson.

Dart Pin #5: Negative World View

Look at what you’re looking at. Don’t wrap yourself up with all the negativities of the world. In building self-esteem, we must learn how to make the best out of worst situations.

Dart Pin #6: Determination Theory

The way you are and your behavioral traits is said to be a mixed end product of your inherited traits (genetics), your upbringing (psychic), and your environmental surroundings such as your spouse, the company, the economy or your circle of friends. You have your own identity. If your father is a failure, it doesn't mean you have to be a failure too. Learn from other people's experience, so you'll never have to encounter the same mistakes.

Sometimes, you may want to wonder if some people are born leaders or positive thinkers. NO. **Being positive, and staying positive is a choice.** Building self-esteem and drawing lines for self-improvement is a choice, not a rule or a talent. God wouldn't come down from heaven and tell you – “George, you may now have the permission to build self-esteem and improve your self.”

In life, it's hard to stay tough specially when things and people around you keep pulling you down. When we get to the battlefield, we should choose the right luggage to bring and armors to use, and pick those that are bullet proof. Life's options give us arrays of more options. Along the battle, we will get hit and bruised. And wearing a bulletproof armor ideally means 'self change'. The kind of change which comes from within. Voluntarily. Armor or Self Change changes 3 things: our attitude, our behavior and our way of thinking.

Building self-esteem will eventually lead to self-improvement if we start to become responsible for who we are, what we have and what we do. Its like a flame that should gradually spread like a brush fire from inside and out. When we develop self-esteem, we take control of our mission, values and discipline. Self-esteem brings about self-improvement, true assessment, and determination. So how do you start putting up the building blocks of self-esteem? Be positive. Be contented and happy. Be appreciative. Never miss an opportunity to compliment. A positive way of living will help you build self-esteem, your starter guide to self-improvement.

Spiritual Growth: the Spiritual Challenge of Modern Times

To grow spiritually in a world defined by power, money, and influence is a Herculean task. Modern conveniences such as electronic equipments, gadgets,

and tools as well as entertainment through television, magazines, and the web have predisposed us to confine our attention mostly to physical needs and wants. As a result, our concepts of self-worth and self-meaning are muddled. How can we strike a balance between the material and spiritual aspects of our lives?

To grow spiritually is to look inward.

Introspection goes beyond recalling the things that happened in a day, week, or month. You need to look closely and reflect on your thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and motivations. Periodically examining your experiences, the decisions you make, the relationships you have, and the things you engage in provide useful insights on your life goals, on the good traits you must sustain and the bad traits you have to discard. Moreover, it gives you clues on how to act, react, and conduct yourself in the midst of any situation. Like any skill, introspection can be learned; all it takes is the courage and willingness to seek the truths that lie within you. Here are some pointers when you introspect: be objective, be forgiving of yourself, and focus on your areas for improvement.

To grow spiritually is to develop your potentials.

Religion and science have differing views on matters of the human spirit. Religion views people as spiritual beings temporarily living on Earth, while science views the spirit as just one dimension of an individual. Mastery of the self is a recurring theme in both Christian (Western) and Islamic (Eastern) teachings. The needs of the body are recognized but placed under the needs of the spirit. Beliefs, values, morality, rules, experiences, and good works provide the blueprint to ensure the growth of the spiritual being. In Psychology, realizing one's full potential is to self-actualize.

Maslow identified several human needs: **physiological, security, belongingness, esteem, cognitive, aesthetic, self-actualization, and self-transcendence**. James earlier categorized these needs into three: material, emotional, and spiritual. When you have satisfied the basic physiological and emotional needs, spiritual or existential needs come next. Achieving each need leads to the total development of the individual. Perhaps the difference between these two religions and psychology is the end of self-development: Christianity and Islam see that self-development is a means toward serving God, while psychology view that self-development is an end by itself.

To grow spiritually is to search for meaning.

Religions that believe in the existence of God such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam suppose that the purpose of the human life is to serve the Creator of all things. Several theories in psychology propose that we ultimately give meaning to our lives. Whether we believe that life's meaning is pre-determined or self-directed, to grow in spirit is to realize that we do not merely exist. We do not know the meaning of our lives at birth; but we gain knowledge and wisdom from our interactions with people and from our actions and reactions to the situations we are in. As we discover this meaning, there are certain beliefs and values that we reject and affirm. Our lives have purpose. This purpose puts all our physical, emotional, and intellectual potentials into use; sustains us during trying times; and gives us something to look forward to---a goal to achieve, a destination to reach. A person without purpose or meaning is like a drifting ship at sea.

To grow spiritually is to recognize interconnections.

Religions stress the concept of our relatedness to all creation, live and inanimate. Thus we call other people "brothers and sisters" even if there are no direct blood relations. Moreover, deity-centered religions such as Christianity and Islam speak of the relationship between humans and a higher being. On the other hand, science expounds on our link to other living things through the evolution theory. This relatedness is clearly seen in the concept of ecology, the interaction between living and non-living things. In psychology, connectedness is a characteristic of self-transcendence, the highest human need according to Maslow. Recognizing your connection to all things makes you more humble and respectful of people, animals, plants, and things in nature. It makes you appreciate everything around you. It moves you to go beyond your comfort zone and reach out to other people, and become stewards of all other things around you.

Growth is a process thus to grow in spirit is a **day-to-day** encounter. We win some, we lose some, but the important thing is that we learn, and from this knowledge, further spiritual growth is made possible.

Motivation: The Heart of Self-Improvement

Pain may sometimes be the reason why people change. Getting flunked grades make us realize that we need to study. Debts remind us of our inability to look for a source of income. Being humiliated gives us the 'push' to speak up and fight for ourselves to save our face from the next embarrassments. It may be a bitter

experience, a friend's tragic story, a great movie, or an inspiring book that will help us get up and get just the right amount of motivation we need in order to improve ourselves.

With the countless negativities the world brings about, how do we keep motivated? Try on the tips I prepared from **A to Z!**

- A. **Achieve your dreams.** Avoid negative people, things and places. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "the future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."
- B. **Believe in your self**, and in what you can do.
- C. **Consider things on every angle and aspect.** Motivation comes from determination. To be able to understand life, you should feel the sun from both sides.
- D. **Don't give in and don't give up.** Thomas Edison failed once, twice, more than thrice before he came up with his invention and perfected the incandescent light bulb. Make motivation as your steering wheel.
- E. **Enjoy.** Work as if you don't need money. Dance as if nobody's watching. Love as if you never cried. Learn as if you'll live forever. Motivation takes place when people are happy.
- F. **Family and Friends** – are life's greatest 'F' treasures. Don't loose sight of them.
- G. **Give more than what is enough.** Where does motivation and self-improvement take place at work? At home? At school? When you exert extra effort in doing things.
- H. **Hang on to your dreams.** They may dangle in there for a moment, but these little stars will be your driving force.
- I. **Ignore those who try to destroy you.** Don't let other people to get the best of you. Stay out of toxic people – the kind of friends who hates to hear about your success.
- J. **Just be yourself.** The key to success is to be yourself. And the key to failure is to try to please everyone.

- K. **Keep trying no matter how hard life may seem.** When a person is motivated, eventually he sees a harsh life finally clearing out, paving the way to self-improvement.
- L. **Learn to love your self.** Now isn't that easy?
- M. **Make things happen.** Motivation is when your dreams are put into work clothes.
- N. **Never lie, cheat or steal.** Always play a fair game.
- O. **Open your eyes.** People should learn the horse attitude and horse sense. They see things in 2 ways – how they want things to be, and how they should be.
- P. **Practice makes perfect.** Practice is about motivation. It lets us learn repertoire and ways on how can we recover from our mistakes.
- Q. **Quitters never win.** And winners never quit. So, choose your fate – are you going to be a quitter? Or a winner?
- R. **Ready yourself.** Motivation is also about preparation. We must hear the little voice within us telling us to get started before others will get on their feet and try to push us around. Remember, it wasn't raining when Noah build the ark.
- S. **Stop procrastinating!**
- T. **Take control of your life.** Discipline or self control gives synonymously with motivation. Both are key factors in self-improvement.
- U. **Understand others.** If you know very well how to talk, you should also learn how to listen. Yearn to understand first, and to be understood the second.
- V. **Visualize it.** Motivation without vision is like a boat on a dry land.
- W. **Want it more than anything.** Dreaming means believing. And to believe is something that is rooted out from the roots of motivation and self-improvement.

- X. **X Factor is what will make you different from the others.** When you are motivated, you tend to put on “extras” on your life like extra time for family, extra help at work, extra care for friends, and so on.
- Y. **You are unique.** No one in this world looks, acts, or talks like you. Value your life and existence, because you’re just going to spend it once.
- A. **Zero in on your dreams and go for it!!!**

Unlocking Your Self Improvement Power

When we look at a certain object, a painting for example – we won’t be able to appreciate what’s in it, what is painted and what else goes with it if the painting is just an inch away from our face. But if we try to take it a little further, we’ll have a clearer vision of the whole artwork.

We reach a point in our life when we are ready for change and a whole bunch of information that will help us unlock our self-improvement power. Until then, something can be staring us right under our nose but we don’t see it. The only time we think of unlocking our self-improvement power is when everything got worst.

Take the frog principle for example.

Try placing Frog A in a pot of boiling water. What happens? He twerps! He jumps off! Why? Because he is not able to tolerate sudden change in his environment – the water’s temperature. Then try Frog B: place him in a lukewarm water, then turn the gas stove on. Wait until the water reaches a certain boiling point. Frog B then thinks “Ooh... it’s a bit warm in here”.

People are like Frog B in general. Today, Anna thinks Carl hates her. Tomorrow, Patrick walks up to her and told her he hates her. Anna stays the same and doesn’t mind her what her friends says. The next day, she learned that Kim and John also abhors her. Anna doesn’t realize at once the importance and the need for self-improvement until the entire community hates her.

We learn our lessons when we experience pain. We finally see the warning signs and signals when things get rough and tough. When do we realize that we need

to change diets? When none of our jeans and shirts would fit us. When do we stop eating candies and chocolates? When all of our teeth has fallen off. When do we realize that we need to stop smoking? When our lungs have gone bad. When do we pray and ask for help? When we realize that we're gonna die tomorrow.

The only time most of us ever learn about unlocking our self-improvement power is when the whole world is crashing and falling apart. We think and feel this way because it is not easy to change. But change becomes more painful when we ignore it.

Change will happen, like it or hate it. At one point or another, we are all going to experience different turning points in our life – and we are all going to eventually unlock our self-improvement power not because the world says so, not because our friends are nagging us, but because we realized its for our own good.

Happy people don't just accept change, they embrace it. Now, you don't have to feel a tremendous heat before realizing the need for self-improvement. Unlocking your self-improvement power means unlocking yourself up in the cage of thought that "its just the way I am". It is such a poor excuse for people who fear and resist change. Most of us program our minds like computers.

Jen repeatedly tells everyone that she doesn't have the guts to be around groups of people. She heard her mom, her dad, her sister, her teacher tell the same things about her to other people. Over the years, that is what Jen believes. She believes its her story. And what happens? Every time a great crowd would troop over their house, in school, and in the community – she tends to step back, shy away and lock herself up in a room. Jen didn't only believed in her story, she lived it.

Jen has to realize that she is not what she is in her story. Instead of having her story post around her face for everyone to remember, she has to have the spirit and show people "I am an important person and I should be treated accordingly!"

Self-improvement may not be everybody's favorite word, but if we look at things in a different point of view, we might have greater chances of enjoying the whole process instead of counting the days until we are fully improved. Three sessions in a week at the gym would result to a healthier life, reading books instead of looking at porns will shape up a more profound knowledge, going out with friends and peers will help you take a step back from work and unwind. And just when

you are enjoying the whole process of unlocking your self-improvement power, you'll realize that you're beginning to take things light and become happy.

Now for the...

Crash Course 7-Day Program to Self-Improvement

I seem to lost count on how many times I've read and heard of celebrity marriages failing almost left and right. Not that I care (and personally I don't), it seems strange that we often see movie and TV stars as flawless people, living the fairytale life of riches and glamour. I suppose we all have to stop sticking our heads in the clouds and face reality.

There are many ways to lose your sense of self-esteem despite of how trivial it could get. But whatever happens, we should all try not to lose our own sense of self.

So what does it take to be a cut above the rest? Here are some of the things you can think and improve on that should be enough for a week.

Day 1: Know your purpose.

Are you wandering through life with little direction - hoping that you'll find happiness, health and prosperity? Identify your life purpose or mission statement and you will have your own unique compass that will lead you to your truth north every time.

This may seem tricky at first when you see yourself to be in a tight or even dead end. But there's always that little loophole to turn things around and you can make a big difference to yourself.

Day 2: Know your values.

What do you value most? Make a list of your top 5 values. Some examples are security, freedom, family, spiritual development, learning. As you set your goals for 2005 - check your goals against your values. If the goal doesn't align with any of your top five values - you may want to reconsider it or revise it.

The number shouldn't discourage you, instead it should motivate you to do more than you can ever dreamed of.

Day 3: Know your needs.

Unmet needs can keep you from living authentically. Take care of yourself. Do you have a need to be acknowledged, to be right, to be in control, to be loved? There are so many people who lived their lives without realizing their dreams and most of them end up being stressed or even depressed for that matter. List your top four needs and get them met before it's too late!

Day 4: Know your passions.

You know who you are and what you truly enjoy in life. Obstacles like doubt and lack of enthusiasm will only hinder you, but will not derail your chance to become the person you ought to be. Express yourself and honor the people who has inspired you to become the very person you wanted to be.

Day 5: Live from the inside out.

Increase your awareness of your inner wisdom by regularly reflecting in silence. Commune with nature. Breathe deeply to quiet your distracted mind. For most of us city slickers it's hard to even find the peace and quiet we want even in our own home. In my case I often just sit in a dimly lit room and play some classical music. There's sound, yes, but music does soothe the savage beast.

Day 6: Honor your strengths.

What are your positive traits? What special talents do you have? List three - if you get stuck, ask those closest to you to help identify these. Are you imaginative, witty, good with your hands? Find ways to express your authentic self through your strengths. You can increase your self-confidence when you can share what you know to others.

Day 7: Serve others.

When you live authentically, you may find that you develop an interconnected sense of being. When you are true to who you are, living your purpose and giving of your talents to the world around you, you give back in service what you came to share with others -your spirit - your essence. The rewards for sharing your gift

with those close to you is indeed rewarding, much more if it were to be the eyes of a stranger who can appreciate what you have done to them.

Self-improvement is indeed one type of work that is worth it. It shouldn't always be within the confines of an office building, or maybe in the four corners of your own room. The difference lies within ourselves and how much we want to change for the better.

As the book is coming to an end, I'd like to share with you some 10 of my favorite quotes on improving yourself. Hope you find them useful!

10 Inspirational Self-Improvement Quotes

1. **"Money is better than poverty, if only for financial reasons."** It sounds good to me, I mean the practicality of all things does involve money but it doesn't have to take an arm and a leg to get it.
2. **"I believe there is something out there watching us. Unfortunately, it's the government."** 'Enough said.
3. **"There are worse things in life than death. Have you ever spent an evening with an insurance salesman?"** This happens to be one of the classic ones. I mean the issue about life's little problems isn't all that bad, until 'he' shows up. Sure, relationships can get complicated, or does have its complications that probably any author about relationships is bound to discover it soon. We follow what our heart desires, unless you're talking about the heart as in the heart that pump blood throughout your body.
4. **"Love is the answer, but while you're waiting for the answer, sex raises some pretty interesting questions."** And if you want more, just keep on asking!
5. **"A fast word about oral contraception. I asked a girl to go to bed with me, she said 'no'."** It sounds, 'practical', I think. And when it comes to everyday life, he really knows how to make the best out of every possible scenario, and it doesn't involve a lawsuit if he strikes a nerve.
6. **"Basically my wife was immature. I'd be at home in the bath and she'd come in and sink my boats."** I never had a boat in my bathtub

before. Just staring at it while soaking in hot water makes me seasick already.

7. **"I am not afraid of death, I just don't want to be there when it happens."** If it rains, it pours.
8. **"I am thankful for laughter, except when milk comes out of my nose."** It could get worse when you're guzzling on beer... or mouthwash, and it happened to me once!
9. **"If you want to make God laugh, tell him about your plans."** At least he doesn't smite us with lightning, and I'm thankful for that. And despite of what may happen to all of us in the next ten, twenty, or even thirty years, I guess we all have to see things in a different kind of light and not just perspective. I can't seem to imagine life without any piece of wisdom that could guide us. Whether we're religious or not, it takes more courage to accept your fears and learn how to deal with them is all that matters when it comes to even just getting along. And to sum things up, here is the last nugget of wisdom to go by... however, whenever, and wherever we may be.
10. **"The talent for being happy is appreciating and liking what you have, instead of what you don't have."**