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# BECOMING MORE PRODUCTIVE

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## INTRODUCTION

Desire alone is not sufficient but commensurate effort is also needed in order to succeed. If you carefully observe successful people, there is hard work and sustained effort behind their success. Everyone gets opportunities in life – big or small. If you let go, that opportunity will not come back. To enhance one's status or to make a mark, a firm determination, burning desire to achieve, a clear goal, an appropriate attitude and a good planning together with adequate effort are required. A solid plan with necessary minor changes as you progress will help you to achieve the goal. Failure is for want of understanding and due to deficiencies in planning. Learning from failures, maintaining good human relationships, observing humility will make victory easier. For a successful person, retaining what he has achieved is equally important. One should gain in wisdom along with success as otherwise with complacency and over-confidence, he is likely to miss what he has achieved with great effort. Developing a well rounded personality will go a long way in facing the life with enthusiasm and confidence. There are many little things that can make a real big difference in one's progress. An attempt has been made to cover some of them here.

## CHARACTER

The character is the most essential aspect of any person. The character is made up of those principles and values that give your life direction, meaning and depth. These constitute your inner sense of what is right and wrong based not on laws or rules of conduct but on who you are. They include such traits as integrity, honesty, courage, fairness

and generosity which arise from the hard choices we have to make in life. So wrong is simply in doing wrong, not in getting caught. Many have come to believe that the only things we need for success are talent, energy and personality. But over the long haul who we are is more important than who we appear to be. We can only experience true success and happiness by making the character the bedrock of our lives. In the personality ethic, success became more a function of charm, skills and techniques that, at least on the surface, lubricate the process of human interaction. Rather than struggle with thorny issues of right and wrong, we turned to make things run smoothly. While skills are certainly needed for success, it can never guarantee happiness and fulfillment. These come from developing the character.

One can begin to build the character at any age by learning how to look within. With the inside-out approach, private victories precede public victories. These private victories are simply promises you make to yourself and others and then keep them. They can be as simple as a commitment to exercise everyday. The first step towards building the character is to tackle a hard choice, commit to change and stay with it. As you get into the habit of building character in the smaller areas of your life, your ability to develop the character in more important spheres will grow.

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Essential ingredients for the character growth are trust, being loyal to those who are not present, admitting your mistake, listening, empathising and appreciating. All our relationships follow the contours of life; they have ups and downs. The true character begins at home. Our families provide the opportunity to nurture it.

### **MASTER THE SKILL OF OPTIMISM**

Optimists fare better than pessimists in almost every aspect of life, often achieving more and enjoying greater social success. Optimistic people are also less susceptible to depression and physical ills. The optimist attributes make failure to be temporary. He doesn't let one set back contaminate his whole life. When things go wrong, he looks for a new approach. The following would help to master the skills of optimism:

- Challenge negative thoughts (Think of failure as the result of a faulty strategy. Then, instead of feeling helpless, you can take action)
- Rehearse being a winner (By the time you face the real challenge, your mental rehearsals should have given you confidence and will power)
- Give yourself credit (Taking pride in your accomplishments and builds a sense of self-worth)
- Set specific goals wisely (Break down large goals into smaller ones. With each interim goal you reach, you will feel energized and excited about what is to come)

### **MANNERS MAKETH MAN**

Civilised behaviour demands that one should observe proper etiquette and manners while dealing with others. Some of them are:

- Do not read others papers or give your opinion unasked.
- Give to others what is due to them.

- Let other people speak first.
- Offer your seat.
- Do not show that you are glad at the misfortune of any body even if he were your enemy.
- If you must tick somebody off, do it all with sweetness and mildness. You yourself should take all admonitions thankfully.
- Dress modestly.
- Do not laugh too loud or too much.
- Labour make effort to keep alive within yourself that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.
- In life, knowing how to lose is often just as important as knowing how to win.

### **SIMPLIFY YOUR LIFE**

Simplifying means becoming aware of ways, big and small, that we expend money, time, energy and then taking steps to curb the waste. The following suggestions will enable to gain control over life's hassles in order to have time for enjoyments:

- Start the day right (Do everything possible the night before to prepare for the next day. Keep things at their proper places).
- Declutter your home (Freeing yourself from unnecessary possessions frees time. Clean one drawer/shelf at a time. Don't put anything down for now. Otherwise, you will have to handle everything more than once)
- Gently say No (Prioritise and limit your volunteer work)
- Don't save coins and waste hours.
- Encourage your kids to help.
- Turn off the TV.

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## USE INTUITION

Intuition is a hunch. Hunches are prompts from the adaptive unconscious. The adaptive unconscious is a mechanism in the brain that processes an ocean of sensory information, sorting it, inferring causes, judging people and influencing feelings and behaviour – all without our conscious mind being aware. These hidden powers of perception are what allow people to see the invisible. Our internal radar is on alert for patterns of threat. Listening to your body's cues can have very big payoffs. Develop the gift for reading faces. Spot micro expressions. These very intense bursts of emotion only last a quarter of a second but signal a person's true feelings, even if he is trying to hide them.

## COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

Try for the best but refuse to be defeated by life. Always add up good things. No matter how bad things were, someone, somewhere, was in even worse shape. When faced with adversity, look for good points in it. It could have been a lot worse. Bad stuff doesn't last. Never stop doing your best.

## COMMON SENSE – REQUISITE FOR SUCCESS

In life, education is strength and common sense is the expertise which one can utilise with the strength. It is not sufficient if the work is done properly but it is necessary to do at the right time, the right place and the right work. Education teaches what is to be done. But common sense guides when and how the work is to be done. Education without common sense not only makes a person weak but also makes him inept for worldly dealings in life. One has to develop a close sense of observation, worldly wisdom and common sense. Then, utilise them rightly at the right time to achieve success.

## ENHANCING EFFECTIVENESS

- Observe, study and understand how others are performing and then make your thoughtful plan.
- Encourage others by thinking that they are worth knowing and they would create enthusiasm in you.

- Divert their attention from their mistakes by treating them lightly and suggesting ways to overcome.

- Try to know whether things are told to you in confidence in anger/excitement.

- Discard words/actions that hurt others.

- Keep silent instead of magnifying others' mistakes and glorifying your achievements.

- Learn to disagree with politeness and respect.

- Give others opportunities to talk.

- Help those who are in need.

- Recognise good points in others and appreciate.

- Control the impatience when someone pulls you down. Accept apologies for their behaviour and move on.

- Remember birthdays/marriage anniversaries of your close relatives/ friends and wish them.

- Do not laugh disrespectfully, do not show intolerance, do not create enmity.

Conduct yourself in a way that others do not have to feel sorry for knowing you. Strive to make others happy all the time.

## BE TRUE TO YOURSELF

Integrity means having a personal standard of morality and ethics that does not sell out to expediency and that is not relative to the situation at hand. Keep the following principles:

- Stand firmly for your convictions in the face of personal pressure.

- Always give others credit that is rightfully theirs

- Be honest and open about who you really are

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Self – respect and a clear conscience are powerful components of integrity and are the basis for enriching your relationships with others. Integrity means you do what you do because it is right and not just fashionable or politically correct. A life of principle will always win the day.

## MANAGING TIME

Most people are wearing themselves out and feeling out of control. Work before health and pleasure soon becomes work instead of health and pleasure. That is not a great way to live. An important principle about managing time: prioritize, decide what you want in your life and put that first. On a daily basis, regular meals, adequate sleep and time with your family, exercise, leisure, friendships and hobbies should also be regular aspects of life. The point is to do something for yourself everyday. The choice is yours. Time should be spent on whatever makes you feel good about yourself and your life. Take a nap. Take a walk. Take a hobby. Of course, you will have to trade off some of the things that are currently clogging your schedule to make room for your new priorities. Stop bringing your briefcase home from the office. Fill more of your time with want – to – dos instead of have - to –dos. Make yourself also happy. Balance the goal.

## HOW TO ALWAYS STAY SMART

- Review and prioritize (Review the work of the preceding six months and ask: What were the things on which we should concentrate? What were the things on which we should improve? What were the things each of us needed to learn? Prepare the new programme of work and learning for the next six months)
- Change with the times (Whenever you have a new assignment, ask yourself, what do I need to do to be effective?)
- Compare expectations and results (That shows the person what he/she did well and what his/her strengths are. It also shows him what he has to learn and what habits he/she has to change.)

- Choose your legacy (One has to ask oneself for what one wants to be remembered. It should change, both with one's own maturity and with changes in the world. One thing worth being remembered for is the difference one makes in the lives of people).

## HOW TO TALK TO ANYONE, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

The following ingredients would help you learn how to talk:

- You don't have to be quotable.
- The right attitude – the will to talk-is crucial to become a better talker.
- Remember to take turns (With careful listening, good follow-up questions)
- Broaden your horizons.
- Keep it light (Never stay too serious too long)
- Be the genuine you. Be honest. Make a connection. Show empathy, enthusiasm and a willingness to listen, and you can't help becoming a master of talk.

## WAY TO CONDUCT WHEN THERE ARE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

- Agree to discuss issues and accept to listen to others' views.
- Confine to discussion. In case the other person has made a mistake, do not pin point that again.
- Do not argue at the time of meals or before others or when you are angry.
- Do not hurt anyone with words or deeds. Do not resort to unrighteous means to win your point.
- Look for agreeable situations/acceptable opportunities.

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- Show your willingness to accept if you are at fault.
  - Try to forget past differences.

Do the best you can and pray to God for what you are unable to do.

### **GOOD ADVICE**

People generally disregard unsolicited advice. They seek advice from those who are talented and capable. A good advice should be like a suggestion but not an order. There should be respect in give and take. Krishna is the great Guru. After having given an exhaustive treatise to Arjuna in Bhagwad Gita on life and way of living from all angles, Krishna told Arjuna 'Think deeply about the issues that I have told and implement those that are to your liking'.

### **KEEP TRYING FOR VICTORY**

Be attentive and active to seize the opportunity. If you do not take a proper decision at the right time, the opportunity will go away. Do not get disheartened at that. With positive thinking, your conscience will inspire you to try again and again. When you move forward with initiative, firm determination, a burning desire to do something and an aspiration to achieve your goal, you will be able to get hold of opportunities and utilize them to your advantage.

### **INTELLECT WITHOUT MENTAL STRENGTH LEADS TO FAILURE**

Mental strength is the greatest asset of a person. Behind words 'I can do' are hidden vigour, vitality and a sense of purpose. People can be divided into three categories viz. those who have the will power, those who do not have the will power, those who cannot muster will power even if they want. First type achieve whatever they want, second type oppose, third type cannot achieve anything. One who has mental strength is healthy. Intellect without mental strength leads to failure. One who keeps will power under his control, faces issues in life

courageously, overcomes difficulties and achieves success.

### **TO ENCOURAGE CREATIVE THINKING**

- Approach the issue without preconceived notions and without connecting it to an earlier issue or to its solution.
- Keep aside your decision till you gather facts and think about the issue.
- Be prepared to face some problems.
- Consult your colleagues/friends who are not connected with the issue so that you have different opinions before deciding.

### **SECRET TO SUCCESS**

If you desire to achieve success, grow a little taller than average person. Be prepared to work hard. Learn to convert issues/circumstances to your favour for reaching your life's destination. Have the attitude to accept the responsibility. Have confidence that everything will be favourable for a person who is courageous, you will certainly put in your best efforts with an optimistic disposition and will certainly make progress. A strong desire to reach the destination gives the push to reach great heights.

### **KEYS TO SUCCESS**

- Take the full responsibility.
- Do the job right. If you love what you do, it will show. People want to do business with you because they see your commitment)
- Write out a plan (Goals that are not in writing are merely fantasies)
- Be willing to pay the price.
- Become an expert (Improve your skills. Work towards being the best in your field. Study books/magazines pertaining to your work. Study the writings of experts, find out what the best are doing, then do what they do)

- Examine, think and improve continuously your way of working.
- Never give up (Be truly committed to your goal. Be willing to do whatever it takes to make it happen. Spend as much of your day as you can on achieving your goals and dreams. Ask yourself, 'Is what I am doing right now bringing me closer to my goal?' If not, do something that will)
- Don't delay (Go after what you want – energetically and passionately accomplishing your dreams)
- Make it a habit to give your best, strive always for continuous improvement.

### HOW FAITH HELPS

Religious faith can promote physical well-being. Belief in God has a beneficial effect. Faith appears to have a powerful protective effect because:

- Going to religious places guarantees contact with people (Social support is key to health)
- Faith gives a sense of hope and control that counteracts stress.
- Praying evokes beneficial changes in the body.

### MEDITATION

Many are turning to the ancient practice of meditation to address the strains and stresses of hectic schedules. The lessons of meditation are – to be relaxed and aware. Even a few minutes has benefits. It helps you to become much calmer person, more confident and more productive. The basics are:

- Sit in a comfortable position (The classic posture is cross-legged on the floor)
- Straighten your spine
- Breathe deeply through your nose, so that the air completely fills your lungs – expanding your abdomen and entire chest cavity. Then exhale

slowly through your nose or mouth, contracting your abdominal muscles at the end of the exhalation to exhale all the air from your lungs.

- Focus on your breath by counting each inhalation and exhalation. Breathe in slowly for a count of five, then out slowly to the same count of five. If your mind begins to wander, gently bring it back to focus on your breath.

### SECRETS OF GOOD FORTUNE

When you are happy, you are smarter, you interact better with other people and you are healthier. All of this adds up to what we commonly call luck. The following steps will help to become happy-go-lucky.

- Stop, look and listen (Absorb the details of nature)
- Realise things could be worse (Be thankful when good things happen to you)
- Feel the bliss.

### Secrets of lucky people are:

- Assume that the fate is on your side (With that, you are likely to exhibit behaviour that makes people more responsive to you)
- Get an emotional grip (Getting negative emotions under control will help to have a higher level of self – esteem, be more optimistic and be slightly more extrovert)
- Keep your mind open to opportunity (Trust people, share your ideas. Be open and hear what people have to say. That makes you more approachable and an easier target for opportunity)
- Think of the world as yours (Be open to new experiences. Always keep your options open and be prepared to make mistakes. You get more in life when you are willing to learn)



- Keep envy in check (Stay focused on your own goals and dreams)
- Think like a connector (If you know many different types of people, you will hear about many more opportunities. Sociability, energy and openness breed luck)
- Find an upside to everything (To feel lucky, have a positive view of the past and an optimistic view of the present)

## TRAINING

The importance of training needs hardly any emphasis. The purpose of any training is to learn and perform effectively. Progressive companies treat training as an investment in people. The goal of training is to make learning exciting, proactive, self-driven and active.

To keep the people up dated and to have a change from the routine, there should be training at the entry stage as well as periodically during in service. From the employees side, they should volunteer and opt for any training which enables them to acquire new skills.

Learning and improvement are continuous processes. One should try to develop oneself. One should strive to learn all the time by taking good points out of even the worst situations.

Failure is a valuable learning experience. Some bounce back after failure but many don't for want of trying. What is required is a positive attitude, a steely resolve and perseverance.

## CONCLUSION

Those who have reached pinnacles of glory had also undergone difficulties and feelings of helplessness at some point in their life. But with their ceaseless effort achieved happiness and status in life. Keeping the following points in view will enable us also to attain happiness in routine life:

- To make a mistake is natural. Do not worry about that but take care to see that it is not repeated.
- Expertise is limited. It is not possible for anyone to succeed in all fields. So, select a field of your liking, concentrate on that and try to become an expert in that utilising all the talents you have.
- Learn to withstand criticism (Implement if there is a good point in that, otherwise, disregard it)
- Get rid of feelings of envy, hatred and dislike at others' success. They will affect your health. Instead, observe good points and follow them for your benefit.
- Do not neglect your health (Do exercise, yoga and self hypnosis daily to keep yourself physically and mentally fit)
- Cultivate being calm (Do not allow anger, hatred, envy, tiredness and turmoil to come near you)
- Attend parties with friends/relatives. Recollect those experiences whenever you are upset so that you can improve your self-confidence and happiness and start afresh.
- Improve the circle of acquaintances
- Read good books /magazines, visit museums/parks, write poems/articles, go for picnic with friends.

An intelligent person is one who can face issues courageously and fight. Self confidence is the strength. Look at the issue from different angles. Consult friends/experienced people. You will find some solution. Life is short. Being contented, getting rid of envy, respecting elders, discharging one's duties dispassionately, cultivating good friends, conducting righteously, being able to recognise what is good and what is bad, taking ups and downs positively will make life meaningful. In conclusion, the following words come to mind:

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- Those who achieve spectacular success, do enough to get; then they add a little bit of extra effort. That little bit of extra effort makes an enormous difference.
  - If a disappointment becomes a learning and growing experience, it is transformed into a triumph.
  - Make a difference in a positive way and your rewards will be great. Experience the abundance of joy which comes from making things happen and getting things done.
  - To get the most out of each day, establish clear priorities before you start work. Stay focused on your goals, not your immediate problems.
  - It is never too late to make a change for the better in any relationship. A smile is one of God's special gifts to mankind.
  - Derive encouragement at each opportunity. Do not overlook small steps of progress.
  - The way to settle a disagreement is on the basis of what is right, not who is right.
  - Success depends on mental strength and self-belief. One can rise to the top through talent and tenacity. Discipline and an attitudinal change would help to achieve success.
  - Dive deep within, discover the Self in you which is a part of Paramatma, understand the unlimited potential in you, perform selfless action, love and serve others. Judge your success by the degree that you are enjoying peace, health, and love.
  - A balanced perspective at work and a loving response in personal relationships brings harmony all around.