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# EFS SERVANT LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

**"Our life is what our thoughts make it." Marcus Aurelius**

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LEADERSHIP  
NEWSLETTER**



## **THE 5 BIGGEST REGRETS?**

By: John-Paul Iwuoha



### **Do you have any regrets?**

Most people do. But it appears our regrets *gain a lot of weight* as we approach the end of our lives.

For many years, [Bronnie Ware](#) – an Australian nurse and counselor – worked in palliative care; taking care of terminally ill people, most of whom had less than 12 weeks to live. Her patients were typically old people with very serious illnesses, waiting to die. And a lot of her work involved providing counseling and relief from the physical and mental stresses that comes naturally when a human being comes face to face with their mortality.

Death is not a comfortable subject for most people. We prefer to not think or talk about it. But the sad truth is, all of us will die someday.

Knowing you are going to die in a few weeks is a very bitter pill to swallow. And Bronnie noticed as her patients experienced a range of emotions that usually started with denial, and then fear, anger, remorse, more denial, and eventually, acceptance.

As part of therapy, Bronnie would ask about any regrets they had about their lives, and anything they would do differently if life gave them a second chance. Of all the responses she got from her patients, she noticed there were **5 regrets that stood out**. These were the most common regrets her



patients wished they hadn't made as they coursed through life.

*But the regrets of the dying can be sound and invaluable advice for the living.*

And that's why it's a really good thing you're reading this article.

One of the key revelations from Bronnie's study is that we *often take our lives for granted because we are healthy*. Health affords us boundless freedom very few realize, until we no longer have it.

But while her dying patients were helpless in the face of their regrets, you and I still have time to do something about our regrets, before it's too late.

Let's now look at each of the **5 most common regrets** Bronnie observed:

**1. I wish I pursued my dreams and aspirations, and not the life others expected of me.**

According to Bronnie, this was by far the most common regret of all.

When people realize their life is coming to an end, it becomes easier to look back and see all those dreams they had but didn't have the courage to pursue. In many cases, their failure to pursue those dreams were often due to fitting into the expectations of others – usually family, friends and society.

One of her dying patients, Grace, made Bronnie promise that she would pursue all her dreams and live her life to its fullest potential without ever considering what others would say. According to Bronnie, Grace was in a long but unhappy marriage. And after her husband was put in a nursing home, she was diagnosed with a terminal illness. And Grace's biggest regret was that she never was able to pursue all the dreams she put on hold.

I think the biggest lesson from this regret is, *if you know what really makes you happy, do it!* It appears that our unfulfilled dreams and aspirations have a way of silently stalking us, and eventually haunt our memories in our dying days. And if you're afraid of what people will say about your choices, remember that their voices will not matter to you in your dying days.

**2. I wish I didn't work so hard.**

This one makes me feel guilty. According to Bronnie, this regret came from every male patient she nursed. And a few female patients too. As breadwinners, their lives were taken over by work, making a living, and pursuing a career. While this role was important, these patients regretted that they allowed work to take

over their lives causing them to spend less time with their loved ones. Their regrets were usually about missing out on the lives of their children and the companionship of their spouse. When asked what they would do differently if given a second chance, the response was quite surprising.

Most of them believed that *by simplifying our lifestyle and making better choices, we might not need all that money we're chasing.* That way, we can create more space in our lives for happiness and spend more time with the people who mean the most to us.

### **3. I wish I had the courage to express my feelings and speak my mind.**

This one just made me so much bolder. According to Bronnie, many of her dying patients believed they suppressed their true feelings and didn't speak their mind when they should have, because they wanted to keep peace with others. Most of them chose not to confront difficult situations and people, even when it offended them. By suppressing their anger, they built up a lot of bitterness and resentment, which ultimately affected their health. Worse still, harboring bitterness can cripple you emotionally and stand in the way of fulfilling your true potential.

To avoid this type of regret later in life, it's important to understand that honesty and confrontation are a necessary part of healthy relationships. There is a common misconception that confrontation is bad for relationships and can only create division.

Not all the time. In reality, when confrontation is kind, honest and constructive, it helps to deepen mutual respect and understanding and can take the relationship to a healthier level.

By speaking our minds, we express our true feelings and reduce the risks of building up unhealthy stores of bitterness that ultimately hurt us.

### **4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.**

This one is a regret many of us struggle with. Bronnie found that her patients missed their old friends and regretted they didn't give those friendships the investment of time and effort they deserved. *Everyone misses their friends when they're dying.* It appears that when health and youth have faded, and death is looming, people realize that some friendships hold more value than all their wealth and achievements.





According to Bronnie, it all comes down to love and relationships in the end. Nothing else mattered to her patients in the last few weeks of their lives but love and relationships.

We live in a busy world these days. And the pressures and demands of work, city life and trying to raise a family can take its toll on some golden relationships.

Knowing this now, what would you do differently?

### **5) I wish I had let myself be happier**

This is a very humbling one, really. Many of her patients didn't realize until the end of their lives that *happiness is a choice*. They wished they had known that happiness isn't something to be chased and acquired through wealth, social acceptance and the trappings of life. In their deathbeds, these patients realized they could have chosen to be happy, regardless of their circumstances in life – rich or poor. To me, this regret is the most touching.

Throughout our active lives, we often focus too much on acquiring the things we would like to have – wealth, status, power and achievement. We often (wrongly) believe that these things hold the keys to our happiness.

When asked what they could have done differently, here's the key message those dying folks shared: *Learn to relax and appreciate the good things in your life*. That's the only way to find real happiness.

***Happiness is a choice.***

### **Is it possible to live a life without regrets?**

This is the big question I've been asking myself. As no human being is perfect, and I doubt there's anything like a "perfect life", I expect all of us would have some regret(s) in our dying days. But I think the key is to have *as few regrets as possible*. And the best way to die with very few regrets is to live life as if we would die today. After all, almost nobody knows exactly when they'll die.

By living our lives as if the end is nigh, we would realize that we really don't have all the time in the world. As a result, we would procrastinate less, and pursue our truest desires, dreams and aspirations.

Also, to live a life of few regrets, we have to focus on and accommodate ONLY those things and people that make us happy. Because if we try to conform to the expectations of others and hide our true feelings, the regrets could haunt us later in life.

If you're reading this article and you're alive and healthy, you still have a choice.

## Why are some people successful, and others not?

By: Shad Helmstetter, Ph.D.



**“Why are some people successful, and others are not?”**

Here's how it works:

### **1. From the moment you were born ...**

From the moment you were born, every message you received was recorded in your brain. Everything you *say*, everything you *hear*, everything you *see*,

everything you *do*, everything you *experience*—and even every *thought you think*—is recorded in your brain.

**And every message you receive—repeatedly—gets wired in.**

We've learned from the field of neuroscience, that *the key to wiring your brain is repetition.*

### **Repetition, repetition, repetition.**

The messages you get that are *repeated* the most; *wire your brain* the most. The problem is, the part of the brain that *stores* all those messages we get . . . *that* part of the brain doesn't know the difference between something that is *true*, or something that is *false*—*something that is right or wrong, bad or good, positive or negative.* **Your brain just records it—and acts on it as though it's true.**

### **2. Your brain is wired for success or failure.**

Your brain is wired for success or failure. Your brain is actually programmed (“wired”) to succeed—or wired to fail—or something in between.

As a behavioral researcher and the leading authority on self-talk, my research indicates if you grew up in a reasonably positive home, during the first 18 years of your life you were told **“no,” or what**



**you could not do, or what would not work, more than 148,000 times.** Researchers have also told us that as much as **77% of all the programs that you and I have today are false, harmful, or work against us.**

### 3. “Self-Talk Park.”

I’ll show you how this works—how we get programmed. I’ll give you a picture you can take home with you. It’s called “**Self-Talk Park,**” and it works like this:

Let’s say you’re an infant—you’ve just been born—but you find yourself magically standing in Self-Talk Park. And Self-Talk Park is beautiful. There are no roads or pathways at all in Self-Talk Park. It’s a park filled with endless green grass, beautiful trees, and overhead a beautiful blue sky with white, fluffy clouds. It’s a perfect place to be.

Now let’s say you get a “message.” It could be *any* message. And when you get that message, you walk a few short steps through Self-Talk Park. Then you stop and look back, and you can’t even see where you walked, *because you got the message only once*—and you haven’t formed a pathway yet.

But then you get the same message again— and then again—and then a few more times.

You haven’t formed a pathway yet, but you can start to see where you’ve been walking. And then that same message gets repeated frequently, again and again.

In the brain, each time a message is repeated, the brain is actually creating a pathway . . . an actual, physical, chemical, “*neural pathway,*” that gets stronger and stronger, each time the message is repeated.

I’ll give you an example. Something that might be said to a six-year-old: “*Susie, you’re going to grow up to be chubby just like your Aunt Harriet.*”

That isn’t true when Susie first gets that message. But with enough repetition, Susie forms pathways in her brain that makes it become true. When Susie gets that same message—or other, similar messages about her weight or her appearance—repeated often enough, Susie’s own self-talk creates an overweight picture of herself that gets *permanently wired into her brain.*

Now, today, Susie is in her thirties. She’s overweight. She’s starting to look a great deal like her Aunt Harriet—and they don’t even have to be related. By now, Susie is **wired to be overweight.**



Here's another example: "Jimmy, you'll never be President; you're not smart enough. You could never do anything like that."

It's not true, of course, the first time Jimmy hears that—but with enough repetition, it will become true: Jimmy will never be President. He'll probably never do anything that comes close.

Jimmy *could* have done almost *anything*. But it's being 'wired out of him.' With those messages, repeated again and again, telling him what he *cannot* do, Jimmy is going to end up being less, much less, than he could have been. Jimmy is being *wired* to be *less*.

In *our* own lives, through our own self-talk now, we end up repeating the same kinds of messages we first got from the world around us.

**And because of our self-talk, we become our #1 programmer.**

In time, *most* of the pathways in Self-Talk Park come from *us*. Most of the messages we get come from our own self-talk. And unfortunately, many of the messages we give ourselves are the **wrong** messages.

Imagine that the entire wall of this room is a map of *your* Self-Talk Park. No matter how perfect it was when you were born, your map is now *filled* with paths and walkways and roads and highways and superhighways. Your entire map of Self-Talk Park is covered over with those roads and pathways.

We all have a map like that. We all have thousands of roads and pathways we have created—the neural pathways in our brains that we follow every day of our lives. *When we examine those pathways, it's easy to see that many of them are exactly the wrong pathways.* But, our brain is designed to follow them—on *autopilot*—without us even having to think about it.

**And because those pathways are physically wired into our brain, we follow them . . . even if they take us in the wrong direction!** In your brain, every message you get from your own self-talk—creates those pathways. And they're very real.

**Right now, we are literally wiring ourselves to succeed or fail.**



# The T.H.R.I.V.E. THINKING PYRAMID

## A Self-Talk Tool

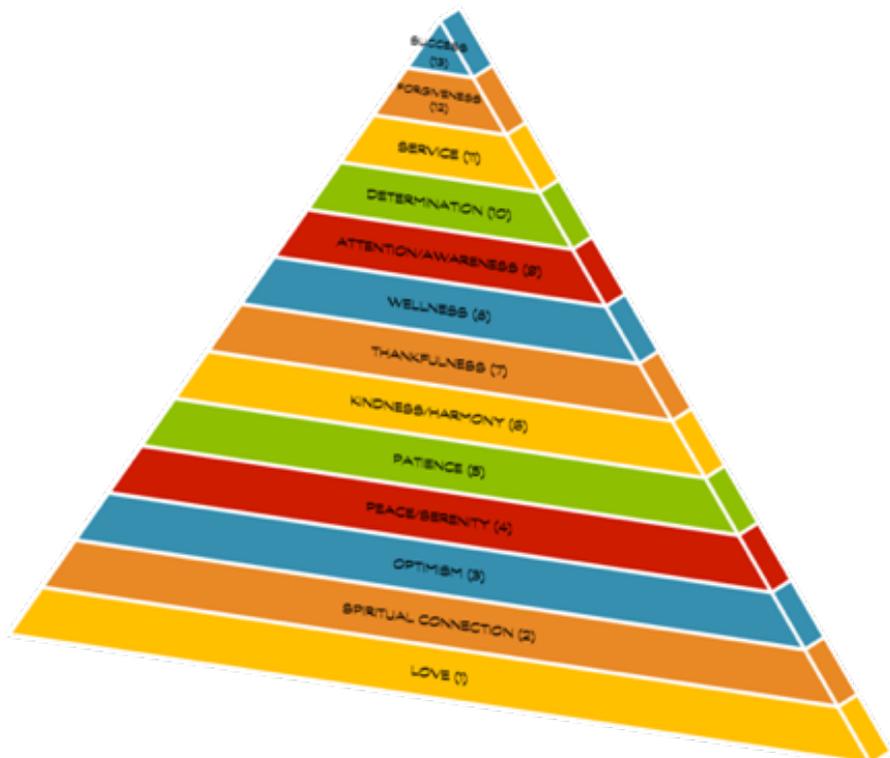
BY: Michael J. Stabile

What we say to others is not nearly as important as what we say to ourselves. All day, every day, our minds are flooded with thoughts that direct us to leading the lives that we live. **What we tell ourselves determines our successes...and our failures.**

If you want to make an improvement in any aspect of your life, it's essential to always start by changing your self-talk if you want to succeed.

**How? Well, when there's a will, there's a way. It is a choice!**

This internal thinking, or *self-talk*, occurs through the conscious area of our mind. What most people are unaware of is our self-talk becomes instructions to our *subconscious*, whose duty is to carry out the "orders" given to it by the *conscious* area of our mind. The subconscious is our own personal servomechanism that works on our behalf 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



I have developed a tool called **the T.H.R.I.V.E. Advantage Thinking Pyramid**. It is a self-talk method to **renew your mind and thinking**. Take charge of your focus of attention and rewire your brain from the inside out. The Pyramid is a tool that focuses on **13 T.H.R.I.V.E. Attributes and Positive Affirmations** that can be repeated at your AM and/or PM routines for 5-10 minutes a day for at least 30-days.

**Take the 30-Day Challenge to start the T.H.R.I.V.E. Advantage.**

In my book, ***Unlocking Buried Treasure: Keys to Master Your Greatest Fears*** the second book in the Papa Legacy Leadership parable series, I present the THRIVE Pyramid self-talk methods. **You can purchase this book in paperback or electronic versions on Amazon.com or Barnes and Nobles.com.**

