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

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TOPIC THIS ISSUE:

Master Your Thinking or Your Thinking will Master You



What Can I Control? 6 Areas of Control

By: Michael J. Stabile

"The human mind is the last great unexplored continent on earth. It contains riches beyond our wildest dreams. It will return anything we want to plant." Earl Nightingale

Earl Nightingale, one of the early great self-help and motivational speakers in *The Strangest Secret* told the following story comparing the mind to planting seeds.

"I want to tell you about a situation that parallels the human mind. Suppose a farmer has some land. And it is good fertile land. Now, the land gives the farmer a choice. He may plant in that land whatever he chooses. The land doesn't care. It's up to the farmer to make the decision.

...Now let's say that the farmer has two seeds in his hand—one is a seed of corn, the other is nightshade, a deadly poison. He digs two little holes in the earth and he plants both seeds, one corn, the other nightshade. He covers up the holes, waters, and takes care of the land. And what will happen?

Invariably, the land will return what's planted. As it's written in the Bible, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." Now remember, the land doesn't care. It will return poison in just as wonderful abundance as it will corn. So up come the two plants: one corn, one poison."

"The human mind is far more fertile, far more incredible and mysterious than the land, but it works the same way. It doesn't care what we plant—success or failure, a concrete, worthwhile goal or confusion, misunderstanding, fear, anxiety, and so on.

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LEADERSHIP
NEWSLETTER**



But what we plant must return to us.

The human mind is the last great” “unexplored continent on earth. It contains riches beyond our wildest dreams. It will return anything we want to plant.”

The human mind is one of the most powerful God-given forces in all of Creation, and we each get the opportunity to steer and direct that force every day of our lives! So here’s an idea: Take control of what’s in your mind!”

Every thought matters and I can control which thoughts will be on my mind and circulating through my brain creating memory and connection. I will THRIVE if I can control what I can control.

Therefore, I will devote my energy to these things. At times, this may cause people to be unhappy with me, but I won’t be unhappy with myself. Only I am responsible for how I steward my time and the energy I give them. And only I will answer to God for them.

What can I control?

My Attitude: *Only I will determine how I think and feel.*

My Time: *Only I will determine how I spend my time and whom I spend it with.*

My Priorities: *Only I will determine what is important in my life and how much time I give to these essentials.*

My Passion: *Only I will identify what I love and what I was created to do!*

My Potential: *Only I will determine where I commit myself to grow.*

My Calling: *Only I will answer to God someday for my purpose.*

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NEWSLETTER

ARE YOUR DAILY HABITS HOLDING YOU BACK?

By: Mike Lenz



You have aspirations, right? You have goals you want to achieve.

Like so many of us, you most likely have a few daily habits that are getting in your way. Hitting that

snooze button too many times? How about those afternoon trips to the vending machine? Hours wasted away browsing social media?

These relatively small habits can actually have a big impact. They can leave us feeling defeated and drain our confidence. They eat up time in our day keeping us from meeting a deadline. They lower the quality of the work that we do complete. A change in even **one bad habit** can be the difference between failure and achievement.

So how do we make a change? It's not going to be easy. It's going to take effort, but here are four steps that can help you change your bad habits.

Step 1 – Write Them Down

GI Joe said, “*Knowing is half the battle*”, and he was right. Sit down and make a list of common actions you know you do and wish you did less. Be as detailed as you can. Taking the time to simply write these down will greatly increase your ability to change.

Be specific. Don't write down “*procrastinate too much*”. Write down the specific actions you do when you are procrastinating. For many of us this is surfing the web, but don't stop there. Which websites? Which mobile apps? Be as specific as you can.

Step 2 – Identify the Trigger

Every habit has a trigger. It's the cue that tells your brain to run your habit routine. For example, you may have a diet coke each day after lunch. In this case, your trigger is eating lunch



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NEWSLETTER**



and the habit is drinking a diet coke.

Take each of the habits you wrote down in step one. Now write down the triggers for each of those actions. Again, be as specific as possible. Do you grab your phone and open Facebook when you wake up in the morning? In this case, waking up is your trigger. Waking up triggers your habit of browsing Facebook in the morning. Connect each action to its trigger.

Determining the trigger is as important as identifying the specific behaviors. You may write down that you spend too much time watching mindless TV. Don't stop there. Now write down the specific time of day or situations where you typically watch TV. Identify those triggers. This will be critical for the next step.

Step 3 – Swap in a New Routine

One of the best ways to break a bad habit is to replace it with a new habit. For example, if you wrote down that you make a trip to the vending machine at the office to buy a cookie each afternoon, trying to change your habit of an afternoon break and your habit of buying a cookie would take double the effort. Plus, in this case, there may be nothing wrong with taking a well-earned afternoon break.

Therefore, focus on changing only the habit of buying a vending machine cookie. Bring some healthy snacks from home and swap out what you eat. Or, change up your afternoon break location and go for a walk.

Wasting too much time in the morning on Facebook while still in bed? Swap out your Facebook habit with some other action that still lets you ease into your day. For example, you could determine that each morning when you wake up, the first thing you are going to do is stretch for 5 minutes. Then you'll get in the shower and start your day.

Step 4 – Shift the Effort

Breaking your old habit with your new routine will take time. So do what you can to shift the effort. Shifting the effort is the act of pushing the scales in favor of your new habit you're working to swap into the place of your old bad habit. There are two ways you can shift the balance.

1. **Increase the effort required for the habit you want to break.** For example, if your habit is social media in the morning, move your phone out of your bedroom. Use it as your alarm? Buy an alarm clock or keep the phone in your bedroom but out of reach of your bed. Make it harder to follow this old routine.

2. **Make your new routine as easy as possible.** If you are working to break an afternoon snacking habit, bring new healthy snacks from home and keep them at your desk. Any action you can take beforehand that removes a step or decision from your new habit will have a big impact on your chances of being successful.

HOW YOU THINK AFFECTS THE OUTCOMES YOU PRODUCE

By: Karima Mariama-Arthur



The single most important factor influencing a person's success -- whether personal or professional -- is mindset.

What you think about consistently has a direct impact on your behavior, and not the other way around. So, it's important to get this fundamental ingredient right.

A seemingly small thing that makes a huge difference, mindset accounts for the primary distinction between those who succeed and those who do not. And, if you are serious about achieving success in any area of your life, you must learn to master yours.

Here are five key reasons why:

1. Developing healthy self-esteem

To successfully accomplish any worthwhile feat, a person must first feel capable of achieving it. It doesn't matter what anyone else thinks. Self-esteem is born of an internal dialogue that



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informs how we perceive and evaluate our worth, positively or negatively. It also frames our self-concept (the comprehensive view we have about ourselves).

Mindset -- a strong and positive one -- is essential to developing healthy self-esteem. It is an important tool that affects our daily self-dialogue and reinforces our most intimate beliefs, attitudes and feelings about ourselves. So, become the gatekeeper of your mind and plant seeds of positivity and inspiration rather than criticism and doubt.

2. Formulating a winning perspective

When it comes to success, there are few things more valuable than perspective. How we choose to attach meaning to events and circumstances has a profound effect on whether we view our glass as half full or half empty. Tony Robbins is famous for his viewpoint on this topic, noting, "Nothing in life has any meaning except the meaning [we] give it." *Touché*.

The truth is that mindset has everything to do with perspective. Our foundational beliefs, attitudes and biases naturally affect the way we process information and experience the world around us. Having an optimistic mindset increases the likelihood of formulating a winning perspective and achieving long-term success.

3. Harnessing drive

Drive is the unwavering determination to achieve an important objective. It includes the process of developing a vision for success and engaging in sustained effort over time. Without drive, achieving most goals would be difficult at best.

Mindset is critical to drive. With the power to direct focus and encourage commitment to higher purpose, it can easily urge someone to challenge the status quo and push past comfort zones. People with drive are self-motivated and strive to accomplish more. They don't waste time complaining about their circumstances, but instead work with conviction to improve them.

4. Facing adversity

No matter what goal you seek to achieve, the path to your success is bound to include some degree of adversity. If you want to get through the rough patches, however, you will need to develop thick skin and learn to face each challenge head on.

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This is where mindset plays a critical role. Adversity tests one's mettle to the core. After facing an extreme hardship, a person may feel justified in succumbing to defeat. For them, it can feel like an easy road. Yet, the capacity to move through the fire, get knocked down and not knocked out, is a true testament to the power of a resilient mindset.

5. Achieving the underlying goal

Goal setting is a multi-faceted process, with achievement being the most obvious indicator of success. Nevertheless, without the proper mindset, you may not get that far. An undertaking that easily eludes even the most well intentioned individuals, achieving a goal requires more than a mere lukewarm desire to succeed.

Mindset is where the rubber meets the road. Taken a step further, mental toughness is what determines whether someone will dig deep and work through hardships to succeed, or simply claim defeat. It includes exercising courage, sustaining effort over long periods and leveraging self-talk to move through each pivotal phase, before ultimately accomplishing the underlying goal.

Are you ready to command your results? If so, make a conscious decision to master your mindset and reach for greater success starting today.

