

# CREATING HAPPINESS

TOOLS FOR IMPROVING YOUR LIFE



JAMES C. CARR

## Wow!

I'm proud of you. You have already passed the first big step in personal development, which is making the choice to take action. By opening up this book, you have taken action.

When most people decide to make a significant life change they talk about it, they research it, they get excited about the outcome, but they never actually do the important thing and take action to get there. The part that requires effort and patience is what trips people up. But that's not you is it? You are going to work with me to change your life, right? It's in your best interest to do so. It would be foolish not to at least give this a chance and you will soon learn why.

I didn't write this to show you how to make money. You won't learn how to start a business or expand your stock portfolio. I'm not going to give you advice on losing weight or making friends. What I *will* do is change the way you think. I will change the way you handle your problems, manage your stress, and make important decisions. What you will get are the *tools* and tricks that you need to earn and create all of those wonderful things in life. You will know how to improve your life, find happiness, and hopefully help others do the same.

So if this book helps you, I encourage you to pass what you learn on to others and help them the way that this information has helped me and [hopefully] helped you.

Enjoy!

# Creating Happiness: Tools for Improving Your Life

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## Personal Development

### What did I get myself in to?

You've started a project, but this is a project that never ends. This is new a path in your life that you not only *want* to go down, but you *need* to. This is a lifestyle change and a change to the way you think about everyday decisions. It is a realization of your true potential, your desires, and lifetime goals. If you're one of the many people that don't already know what they want out of life, we're going to find that out. You will discover yourself and I will help you get motivated to take the first steps to achieving your goals.

You will find things in your life, big and small, that aren't perfect and you will find ways to fix them. You will find things that you want to completely change. You will raise your standards, set goals that might seem unreasonable, and you will execute actions that are so powerful that you will cry when you succeed and prove to yourself that you're capable of amazing things. You will meet those goals because you will have unlocked your true potential, which is on a level that you never thought possible. You can't afford not to make this change.

The topic of personal development is very broad. It involves improving many different aspects of your life: knowledge, skills, awareness, leadership, values, social, relationships, wealth, health, potential, confidence, talents, and identity. One could probably write a series of books for each of those subjects, but what I plan to do is give you some understanding, some motivation, and the tools you need to improve on all of those aspects and also develop way of thinking that will stick with you for the rest of your life.

If you're reading this book then chances are you are already aware of the phrases "*personal growth*" or "*personal development*". These are often associated with various social stigmas about self-help. You might have heard these terms when referring to pseudo-scientific new age thinking systems like *The Secret* or *The Law of Attraction*. Well you need to

disassociate the term “personal development” from anything except what it actually is- the act of growing yourself and improving your life.

## The Law of Attraction: or so they say

While we're on the subject of *Law of Attraction*, I have to explain this system and the hype it has created in recent years. The overall message that these ideas portray are indeed positive and have worked for many people. My problem with them is that they are over-complicated explanations for extremely simple subjects, presumably to create content and justify selling the product. I have a problem with over-complicating something for the sake of marketing when the right thing to do is the exact opposite: simplify something with the intention of helping people.

I have read many related books, including *The Secret*, and the overall message is the same throughout these books- think positive. That pretty much sums up *The Secret* in two words. The claim is that by *thinking positive* and focusing on what you want, instead of what you don't want, you will bring yourself closer to obtaining what you want. Well there is so much more to it than that and you're fooling yourself to think all you have to do is think positive.

The program goes on to explain how thinking positive is scientifically proven to give you what you want by relating it to Newton's *Law of Attraction*. Well I hate to break it to you but Newton's “Law of Attraction” is actually the Law of Universal Gravitation and deals *exclusively* with physics and nothing more, but I digress...

The actual underlying message of the *Law of Attraction* is actually quite useful and has truth to it- but I don't give them credit. When you continuously think positive, your life will be much better. This isn't due to Newton's laws, but simple psychology. By thinking positive, your mind brings your level of awareness to focus on those things and you start to notice them.

For example, have you noticed that when you buy a car you start noticing that same model of car more often? Your mind is focused on that type of car whereas you ignored it before because it had no importance. But now your mind has given that type of car some level of importance, since you own one of them. If we were always aware of everything around us, we would go insane!

By focusing on reaching your goals instead of paying your bills, your mind is focusing your energy and effort towards meeting those goals. You will also begin to subconsciously adjust your actions and decisions to meet those goals. If you just sit and think about your debt and wallow in sadness, that's what you will get and nothing will improve.

That is the message being portrayed with these Law of Attraction programs, however, in my opinion the execution is poor, deceptive, and caused a lot of negativity and criticism towards the personal development and self-help communities. We should re-think what positive thinking does and look at it from a more rational perspective. Don't let the stigmas around *The Secret* or *Law of Attraction* deter you from investing some time into researching self-help and personal development.

### **Clarifying Self-Help**

Not only do I want to clear up any misunderstandings with the topic of personal development, but I want people to understand that to get what you want, it takes more than just positivity. Just because you think positive, the universe isn't going to magically bring you what you want. There isn't an invisible force, driven by your thoughts, that pulls material goods towards your life. The universe doesn't owe you anything.

I also want to clarify that self-help is not a solution to all of your problems. Even though the purpose of self-help is to give you the tools and knowledge to help yourself overcome challenges, it does not mean you

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should just “*suck it up*” and ignore severe problems. We all need a little help sometimes and it is perfectly OK to ask for it. Signs of depression or PTSD, for example, are often not cured by any sort of self-help. In fact, trying to cure yourself can often make the condition worse. You should know when to consult with a therapist or other mental health professional.

Think of self-help also as a tool to understand how to distinguish severe problems that require medical attention from just making adjustments in your life to *improve* your way of living. Positive thinking is still important and so is personal development, as long as you understand its limits. It's very powerful on a psychological level and it is one of the many tools that you need to unlock your full potential and **earn** the things you want in life, but it is not a replacement for medicine. *Just be smart and be safe.*

## The Cycle

Our minds are very complicated. We have spent thousands of years studying ourselves, human behavior, and interaction. In order to even begin to understand the mind, we develop systems. Good systems hold up to different scenarios and I have found one of these good systems. This chapter introduces a system for understanding ourselves when we take action; specifically for our goals. It addresses our confidence, motivation, potential, and the actions we take to meet those goals.

Think of this system like a car. It consists of multiple components like an engine, transmission, axles, etc... When you remove a major component, the car doesn't run; furthermore, if you remove a much smaller piece, say a bolt from one of those components, that can cause the entire component to fail; resulting in a failed system. So one bad bolt can bring your entire car to a halt. Still following me?

On the other hand, if one piece working but not working *efficiently*, the car still runs, but the overall system and individual components may be inefficient. So the goal with this system, like a car, is to be to ensure all of the components and subcomponents are working before you worry about efficiency.

One of my role models, Tony Robbins, introduced me to this amazing 4 step cycle that I use every day. I use it when starting projects, when starting businesses, when meeting people, or just thinking about my future. However, this cycle seemed incomplete to me. So I have expanded on it and would like to share it with you and perhaps simplify it.

This cycle is like the car analogy. When all of the components are working, the system runs. By increasing their efficiency, the overall system is more efficient. Improve one component and the next component in the cycle also improves; likewise, by decreasing the efficiency in any component, the rest of the cycle is affected.



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The components I'm going to show you are dependent on each other and by failing to apply one of them can cause the entire system to fail. The good news is that once you understand how the system works and begin to apply all of the components, you can see progress happen. It will take time, so don't expect to master it all in the next 5 minutes. **Over time, you will master each component and your engine (life) will become more powerful and efficient.**

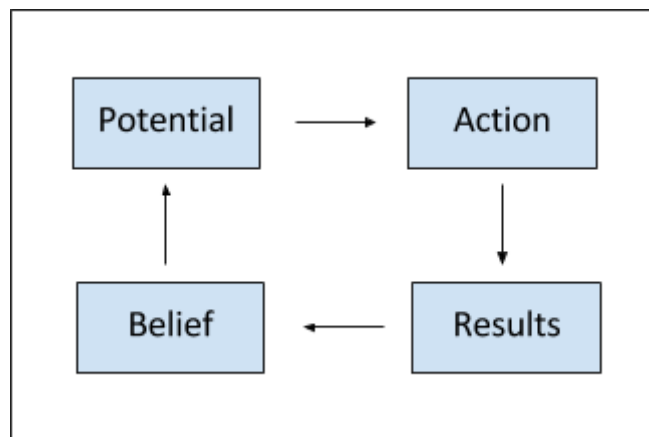
So what are the components?

**Potential** - What am I capable of doing?

**Action** - What actions do I take?

**Results** - What is the outcome of my actions?

**Belief** - How confident or certain am I that I can achieve my goals?



## Potential

Your potential is what you are actually capable of doing. This is a mental and a physical component in the system. Your potential **does not change**, everyone is capable of extraordinary things, we already know this and I will tell you right now that you are far more capable than you think.

We see people every day pull off amazing things that we, or they, never thought possible. Just check out a site like [goodnewsnetwork.org](http://goodnewsnetwork.org) if you want an example of amazing things that people do every day.

As an example, there is a man in India by the name of Jadav Payeng that spent the last 30 years, single handedly, planting seeds to grow a 1360 acre forest. I highly recommend Googling him if you want to learn more, but this is a prime example of something amazing that an average person can accomplish if they just realize their full potential.

People do this every day. People run, bike, or hike across entire countries and continents. People climb mountains, dive deep in the ocean, and build life changing technologies. Not because they are lucky but because they have tapped into their potential. But the pyramids weren't built by imagination alone or by building them in Minecraft, you have to take **action**.

Realizing your potential doesn't solve problems without taking that first step and then following through with it.

## Action

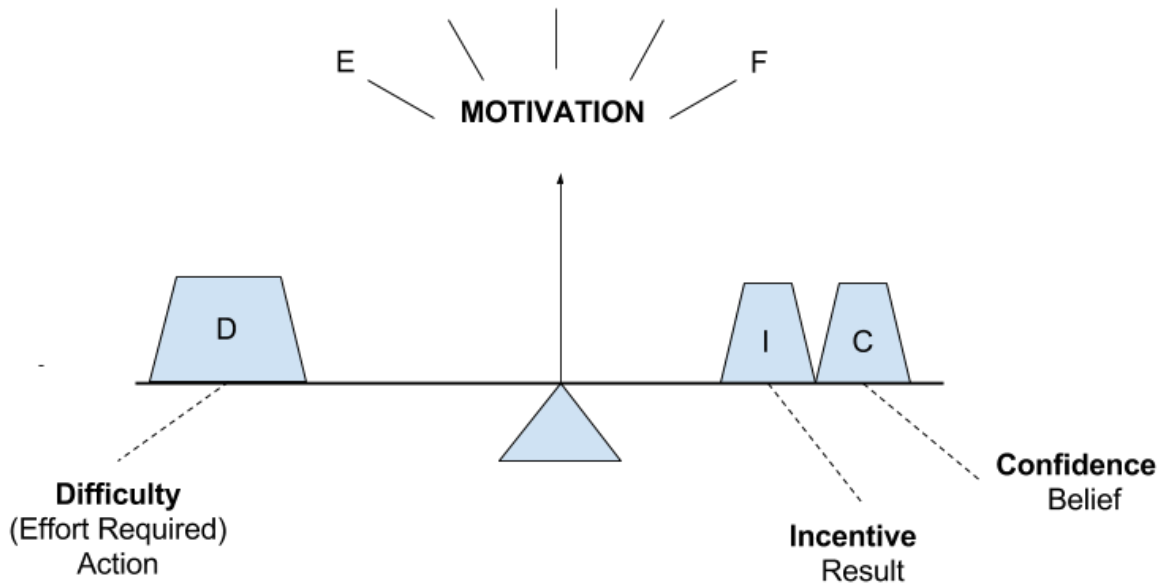
Once you have realized your full potential, you must take action to make it happen. Action is where people's cycles often break. Things like laziness, lack of motivation, or various obstacles, can all cause your cycle to break by hindering your action. Later on I will explain how to overcome these obstacles to ensure you can take the most action possible.

Your potential component may be strong and efficient, but if you don't have something to drive your action component or never take that first action, then you get nowhere. But if you realize your massive potential, you will want to take massive action and massive action is how you get huge results- it's how you get things done.

It is my belief that the number one reason people do not take action to meet their goals is a lack of motivation and confidence. So what is motivation? Well, it's a combination of things, but most importantly it's the amount of *incentive* combined with your *confidence*. If the incentive is big (good reward), you will be more motivated to obtain it. If you have belief in your potential- if you have confidence that you can accomplish the goal, it also motivates you. Likewise, if you believe that you cannot accomplish the goal (i.e. it requires too much effort) then it's hard to even try. Or if the incentive is poor, it's not worth the effort.

**Motivation happens when confidence + incentive outweighs effort.**

Check out my wacky chart below. I'm sure I could have made a much better example, but after testing various graphs and charts, I think this is the best way to visualize the concept- as cheesy as it may be.



Knowing this simple rule is key to motivating yourself. What happens in your thinking when you become motivated? Think about this next time. You have a goal in mind and you're focusing on all of the positive things that will come to you when you achieve that goal- but only if you truly believe it can be accomplished.

So motivation is needed to even begin to take action, *and* if you start to take action but don't follow through to the finish, the cycle breaks, nothing gets done, time is wasted, and you can't have **results**.

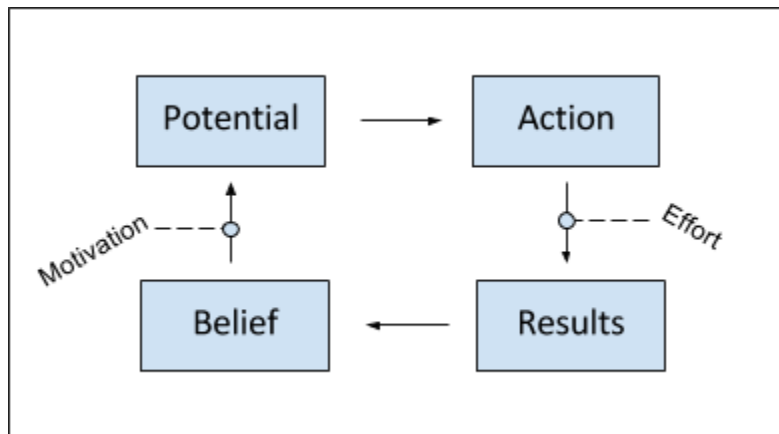
## Results

The results are the reward or outcome of our actions. By taking action and following through to the end, you will have results. It started with realizing your potential, which motivated you to take action, which produced results. Make sure your results are going to be worth the effort. You should set big goals so that your reward will bring the most pleasure.

As I explained with *action*, you need to be motivated to get these results. If the results don't provide enough incentive for you to become motivated enough to take action, then you need to strive for better results or maybe raise the standards of your goals. Shoot for massive results, set big goals with big rewards, because you already know you have the potential, so you will become motivated by the reward.

If Mr. Payeng didn't realize his potential and told himself that there was no way he could plant 1300+ acres of trees, then he wouldn't have bothered trying to take action and in the end he wouldn't have had any results. You see the cycle start to come into play here?

Let's readjust our cycle to account for motivation and effort...



## Belief

This is my favorite part of the cycle to explain to people because this is where it all starts to click and make sense. It is the component that restarts the cycle and sets the pace for the other components. Your beliefs are your *certainty* or your *confidence* in your potential. How certain are you that you can achieve your goal? Well if you had good results in the previous cycle, your certainty is probably pretty high.

Believing in your true potential is what fuels you to take action. That fuel is motivation, as you can see in the previous image. By believing in your potential, you create your motivation. Likewise, the effort is the process of using action to obtain results. Think of it like a battery where you charge it with motivation so that you can work or put forth effort.

If you have excellent results and have a confident mindset, you will be *confident* in your potential. In other words, you will **believe** that you can do better and you can be certain about your potential. You can say to yourself, “Look what I did! Look what I am capable of!” **Belief is fueled by results and belief drives your potential.**

## The Spiral

When people looking for help tell me their story, most of the time they are in a situation where they can feel their lives getting increasingly negative more and more often. When we have your normal everyday problems, we usually resolve them or ignore them and then carry on with our lives, but when we feel that our problems are continuing to get worst, our minds tell us to seek help because something is not right. This sounds obvious right? Well you should become aware of this going forward, because I want to explain what causes this and hopefully you won't need help if this happens to you because it can be fixed by yourself.

I call this the spiral. Where you can feel your life spiraling out of control. The magnitude of the spiral is what determines your pain. Have you or a friend ever have negative results again and again? Have you seen a person that says, "*no matter who I date, they always turn out to be jerks*" or "*no matter what job I get, it always stresses me out and makes me unhappy.*" "*No matter what I do, things won't change.*" This is usually followed by, "*Why me?*" or "*I have to do something!*"

This is *the cycle* when it spirals out of control. This is because their thinking, their **belief**, is driving the entire cycle to produce increasingly bad results over and over, which then lowers their belief in their potential, causing them to take worst action and get worst results.

They attract bad relationships (result), so they think they can't get anyone better (belief), so they limit their (potential), which causes them to do the same (actions) as before, which causes them to pick up more bad relationships (result). They do this cycle over and over until it becomes so bad that they give up. When they give up, they take no action, which yields no results, which means they can't get any relationships.

What if they somehow changed their beliefs? What if we helped them realize that they have the potential to fall in love with the most amazing person in their life, their soulmate? What if they became confident enough

to realize their **potential**? When they realize what they are capable of, they will be excited and motivated to take **action**. When they display that confidence and put forth the effort, they will get **results**. When they realize that they *can* meet decent partners, they will increase their **belief** or confidence in their potential and the spiral gets better and better until they find the right one the fulfills their needs and desires.

*“If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten.”*  
- Tony Robbins

If you are finding yourself or a friend in the downward spiral (a rut), the only way out is to change your way of thinking, believe in yourself, believe in your potential, be certain of that potential and then take action. We do that using those little subcomponents I mentioned earlier, like thinking positive and taking responsibility.

### **Subcomponent - Positive Thinking**

This is one of those important subcomponents of belief; or rather it fits in between belief and potential. Positive thinking yields positive beliefs and allows you to tap into your full potential. An example of this is positive affirmations. If you tell yourself something enough times, you will start to believe it, or at least set that as a focus point. If you constantly keep your mind in a positive, optimistic state, then your beliefs will tend to follow.

Here’s an example: Instead of thinking about why you can’t lose weight or how you have so much debt, imagine yourself after having already lost the weight or imagine yourself debt free. Like I said before, we already know our potential is huge and it doesn’t change, so thinking positive will only help you realize your full potential. Don’t just think about it, believe it. Fuel that belief and get the cycle started.

Maintaining positive thinking is not always easy. There are outside influences that will try to bring you down. People, news, events- all can



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negatively impact your mood and change your way of thinking. Well we know you can't control other people (typically), you can't control the news, and you can't control most of the unfortunate events that happen around you. What you do have is control over yourself. *You* can make the decisions on how you deal with these negative influences.

Here are some important tips that I use to maintain positive thinking:

- **Remove negative people from your life.**
- **Turn off the news or find another source.**
- **Learn how to deal with negative events.**

Remove negative people? Wow, that's a pretty drastic suggestion.

Yes, removing or limited your exposure to people is one of the hardest but most important things you can do. It's not easy, especially if that person is your family, but you have to consider your relationship with them and how important it is to be around them compared to the importance of your own happiness and goals.

I'm not saying just cut off all ties with everyone that says negative things. But there are toxic people that are only going to keep bringing you down and breaking your cycle. So it's your responsibility to find a way to deal with that, because you can't change them.

Here's an example: I used to have a couple of very toxic friends in my teenage years. These were the guys that would make your parents say, "*They are bad influences, you shouldn't hang out with them.*" I was friends with them because we both had similar interests and lived close to each other, but these guys had some very negative traits about them. They would use drugs, get into trouble, and overall had a pretty dangerous and negative life. Their lives were in negative spirals and being around them negatively impacted my life, my confidence, and my mindset. I started to mimic some of their toxic behaviors.

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Much to my good fortune, we moved away from the area and I never saw them again. By not being around negative people, I was able to turn my life around and create a much more positive environment for myself. It was hard at the time to leave my friends, but I look back and I am grateful that I never saw them again. I can imagine that if I kept hanging around that type of environment, I would have ended up in some bad situations or gotten myself into a lot of trouble.

If you have toxic people in your life, consider whether you would be better off without them. This is very hard for family, but sometimes you have to make that choice as to whether you want to continue seeing them or if you need to make an important change. However, there's a third option: Help them. Explain to them that you need only positivity in your life and you can't afford to have any negative influences. Encourage them to join you on this path. Give them an ultimatum: Either they respect your path of positivity and can even join you in your journey or you can't be around them. This comes off harsh, but think about it. Think about your health, your future, and your relationships. All of that is at stake.

All of these decisions and beliefs are entirely controlled by you. You are the only one with the power to change everything and take action. Always remember that making a decision is better than no decision. This is where responsibility comes in.

### **Subcomponent - Responsibility**

The first step towards success is taking responsibility. Where you are today and where you end up is a product of your choices in life. This is more than just something baby boomers like to say to new generations; there is a lot of truth to it and it's a very positive and healthy concept to understand. To put it simply: You need to stop blaming other people and things for your problems and successes.

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I'm not referring to certain circumstances out of your control. Some people have very unfortunate obstacles in life such as physical or mental illness or have lost everything in a disaster; I'm excluding those. What I am talking about are the thousands of daily decisions that you make, consciously and subconsciously, that define who and what you are today. Those decisions will also define who and what you are tomorrow.

With that said, it is important to keep in mind that your past does not decide your future, unless you continue to live there. Whatever happened before can be forgotten<sup>1</sup> and your future can be entirely different, or it can be the same if you choose not to make any changes. This is a decision that you will need to make.

*“Without freedom from the past, there is no freedom at all, because the mind is never new, fresh, innocent.”* - Jiddu Krishnamurti

The car you drive, the job you have, and the place you live are all a result of decisions you have made. If you hate your job for example, you can only blame the decisions that have led you to obtaining that job and staying there. You may think you're unable to leave the job, but you are not. If you think you can't leave your job for whatever the excuse may be, then that is exactly why I wrote this book- to change that way of thinking and to change that mindset.

Even if something out of your control happens, it is your choice as to how you deal with it. It is also your choice to accept things the way they are or take action to change them.

*“Hold yourself responsible for a higher standard than anybody expects of you. Never excuse yourself.”* - Henry Ward Beecher

Bad things will happen, no matter how positive you are or how driven and successful you are. There will come times where you will have to make a decision to accept it or change it. By realizing that you have the ability to

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<sup>1</sup> Of course there are certain exceptions, like PTSD

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change the situation and can take action, you are responding to it, you are being responsible.

If you invest your life savings into a company's stock and that stock tanks, whose fault is that? The irresponsible person will blame the company or the economy because that's easy and doesn't require action, but the responsible person will accept the fact that they made a bad investment and will change their investment strategies for the future. By taking responsibility and deciding to accept or change, you are taking an action.

The irresponsible person that blames others for misfortune is not going to take action, and their cycle will break. Remember, if you don't like the results, change the belief, consider your potential, take action, and get better results.

Let's not forget another major part of taking responsibility. What about the good things that have happened to you? Did you get that promotion because the other candidates failed their interview or did you get it because you showed exceptional skills and charisma? Did you find the love of your life because there's nobody better or did you find them because you are attractive and impressive? Sometimes you have to take credit for the good things that have happened.

Think back at your choices and think how different your life would be if you had chosen a different path.

## Success

What does it mean to have a successful life? A successful life is where you become happy with your current situation and are proud of the decisions that got you there. If a certain aspect of your life is exactly where you want it to be, then you have succeeded.

Everyone has an image, or a set of standards, in their mind on how their lives *should* be. In other words, you have an image on how your body should look or how your career should look. When you don't meet that standard, you're not happy and you don't see yourself as successful. When you're unhappy with your weight, it's because your weight doesn't match how you think your weight *should* be. When you're unhappy with your income, it's because you're not making as much as you feel you *should* be making.

So I say again. A successful life is where you become happy with your current situation and are proud of the decisions that got you there. When you have aligned your weight with how you imagine it should be, then you have succeeded. When your income has met, or exceeded, how you imagine it should be, then you have succeeded.

Now you might think that the secret to happiness is to align every aspect of your life with how you feel it *should* be, but that's not exactly true. Don't get happiness confused with success. If you have succeeded in every aspect of your life, where do you go from there? Our bodies crave growth and improvement. If you meet all of your goals, your life would be boring. Our bodies and our minds need something to strive for- some way to get better. Which is why we raise our standards.

This kind of goes back to the positive spiral again. We raise our standards because once we have met all of our ideals, as I mentioned above, we have discovered our potential and strengthened our belief. At that point there is nowhere to go but creating another goal, or vision, to strive for- having the confidence and belief to keep going and keep growing.

So happiness is just a pursuit? We can't actually get there? No. I'll explain the secret to this magical thing called happiness soon.

## How do I become successful?

Well first you need to figure out what you want. **You can't set a goal to obtain something if you don't even know what it is.** So this is where you need to decide what you want in your life. Take some time to write down exactly what you want and **be specific.** This could be material goods, this could be mental or physical changes, this could be major lifestyle changes or it could be short term goals.

Examples:

*I want to lose 30lb. I want to get a promotion and earn the respect of my colleagues. I want to be financially secure and pay off all of my debt.*

These are all goals that can be obtained. You have the potential, which the piece of the component that is always there and never changes. Now you can begin to think positive, become certain and believe that you can achieve the goal- realize your potential. Finally, *take action.*

Example: *I want to lose 30lb.*

We know you have the potential. With enough effort anyone can lose weight. So what's left? Believe that you have the potential, because you do and you can be certain of it. Well, there's no results yet because you haven't started, that just leaves taking action. Get off your butt and start working. You can throw on some shoes right now and start walking.

When you lose the first 1, 2, or 5lb you have results and those results will reinforce your belief and certainty that you have the potential, which will drive you to take more action and keep producing results. What if you don't see results? You already know you have the potential and you believe it, so you need to change your action. Whether that's eating better or exercising

more, there's something that needs to change so that you can get different results and kick start that positive spiral.

## **Failure - The One Thing You Can't Have**

There's no more failure for you. There are times where you need to re-adjust your action or belief, but there's no failure. Quitting is an irrational decision at this point because we know that if you quit, you fail, and it becomes impossible at that moment to produce any change or produce any results. It's never too late to change your mindset and change your actions to get different results. So why would you quit?

That being said, there will be times where you get undesired results, which used to look like failure, but unless you're giving up you can still re-adjust and continue to strive for good results. Keep working hard and being certain that you have the potential, then your actions will keep you from failing and it will only be a matter of time before you succeed.

## **Work hard to play hard? Or just play hard.**

Speaking of hard work. Don't let anyone tell you that it's normal to hate your job or that work isn't supposed to be fun. That thinking is toxic and is a major cause of living a miserable life. You need to understand that earning a living by having fun is not only possible, it's essential. You should **want** to work hard and hard work should come naturally. How many times have you woken up in the morning, dreading the day of work ahead of you? If you're like I was, then that happened every day. It's draining isn't it? Even after 8 full hours of sleep, you might feel exhausted. That's a bad sign.

Now think about a time where you had some time off of work or think about a time where you had an exciting trip or event ahead of you. You wake up

energized and excited right? Well what if I said that you can have that every day? What if I said that the best way to live life is to feel excited to wake up and start your day, especially if it's "just another work day."

It's important to understand that the quality of your work is reflected by your attitude. If you are passionate about your work then your outcome will be of a much better quality. When we hate our jobs we tend to cut corners and do the minimum amount of work required. It's hard to get motivated to do well at a job that we dislike. So there's no rational reason to stay in a job that you hate. It's unhealthy, a bad decision, and it's a good way to start a bad spiral which can affect the other aspects of your life.

This doesn't only apply to our careers, but any goals. You need to be passionate about those goals and truly want them in order to take quality action and get quality results. If you don't truly want it, your actions will reflect that.

### **Self Esteem and Identity**

Who are you? I don't mean your name. I mean how do you describe yourself? If someone else were to describe you without using your name what would they say? Would they say that you're a caring person, a smart person, a dumb person, a fit person, or a fat person? The identity that you give to yourself will always manifest. If you look at yourself as a stupid person, you will always feel that way no matter how smart you get. As the old saying goes, "*you are your own worst critic.*"

An important step to making drastic life changes is to change your identity. Even if you have to lie to yourself. If you're 100lbs overweight, tell yourself that you're fit and athletic. As you progress with your life goals, it will become more and more aligned. Come up with an identity for yourself and repeat it every day.

Example: "*I am a smart, athletic, successful, and strong person. I am passionate, loving, and caring.*"



## Develop a Vision

Here's a fun project for you. It's actually quite popular and I didn't come up with it myself, but I *can* tell you that it works. It will keep you focused on your goals, your idea of success, and will help you to keep a positive mindset. Also by doing this activity, you are allowing yourself to take some action. By completing this project, you're already progress towards obtaining results and getting that positive cycle moving.

I want you to get a piece of poster board. It can be a piece of cardboard, foam board, or if you're a crafty person you can get one of those foldable presentation boards that kids use for science fair projects.

I want you to get a stack of magazines and go through them. I want you to cut out everything that you want. Go shopping! Pick out nice clothes, pick out your favorite cars, find a nice house, and find anything that symbolizes love, family, friends, good physical health, education- anything that makes you smile! If you have a printer, browse the internet for these pictures. You can also grab quotes, articles, or even just words. Anything positive. Cut it all out and paste it to the board. Fill that board up with positive things.

For my personal board, I filled it up with the usual things that people want: a nice car, a house, a really fancy watch, a couple of kids (stranger's kids, but that's ok!), and I added a wedding cake. I was already happily married, but I wanted to remind myself that someday we will renew our vows and have another amazing wedding. I filled it with various triggering words like "mind", "knowledge", and "love."

Once the board is full, hang it up somewhere in your home. Hang it somewhere where you will be forced to look at it every day. In the bathroom, above the kitchen sink, above your bed, etc... Look at it every day and imagine yourself having all of those things.

Someone in the world has those things and they are just like you. You already have the potential. So look at it and know that you *will* be there

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someday. Don't ever get rid of this board. In 5, 10, or 20 years I want you to look at that board. Ask yourself, "Am I happy now? Am I successful now?" then look at the board and see how it aligns with your current life.

You might be surprised that you don't have any of those things, but you may still be happy and feel successful with your life- and that's great because as we grow, our standards and our values change. As you make more money, you might feel that money isn't as important as you originally thought, so your vision might change.

As I said before, we grow and change, so in 10 or 20 years you might not need those things to be happy, but the important thing is that you have something to strive for. You have specific goals and dreams. You have the hope, the confidence, the potential, and the belief that you *will* succeed.

### **Need some motivation? Here are some ideas:**

Inspirational videos: Watch motivational speeches by famous speakers like Jim Rohn, Tony Robbins, Zig Ziglar, MLK, or Roosevelt.

Find a mentor or role model: Who has an amazing life or amazing values? Who can you look up to? Be it a super hero, athlete, actor/actress, friend, or relative, find someone that you want to be like.

Inspirational movies: There are a lot of great inspirational movies out there, especially if you enjoy sports. Find one that makes you feel positive and motivated. One of my favorites is *The Pursuit of Happiness*.

## Fear

*“So first, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance.” - FDR*

Oh yes, that emotion that controls our lives. Fear is that evil force that limits our potential, limits our beliefs, and hinders our actions. So how do we overcome it? Can we overcome it? Absolutely. Can you imagine what life would be like if we never had to experience fear again? Imagine the possibilities that would open up for you and the amazing things that you would experience.

We have all experienced this in some form- in our dreams. In fact, if you're one of the few that have experienced a lucid dream, you know what I'm talking about. A life without fear can open up amazing possibilities and experiences. You won't hesitate to take opportunities or confront challenges. On a side note, if you haven't experienced lucid dreaming before, I highly recommend looking in to it.

So when I talk about fear, I'm not referring to the natural “fight or flight” response; this is a healthy reaction when one is in danger. The fear I refer to are the thoughts and feelings of anxiety that stem from irrational mental assumptions. As FDR said, it is *“nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror”*. Any fear that we experience that hinders our progress occurs because we don't have a true understanding of the situation or we feel we might experience some kind of pain or loss. Understanding fear is the first step to overcoming it.

Imagine a time when you wanted to accomplish a goal but never got started for fear that something might happen. I'll use the fear of rejection as an example as it's one of the most common fears that we face. We have to stop and ask ourselves, *“What is causing me to be afraid?”* You will most certainly find that your reasons are a bunch of “what ifs” that are negative and might even be irrational. Let's look at the example:

*“I’m not going to ask this person out on a date because...”*

What if:

- they say no
- they laugh at me and I will get embarrassed
- they think less of me

We’ve discovered the fear, so why is it irrational? Well basically none of them are true yet. We know this because *they haven't even happened*. We’ve *created* this scenario in our minds and already it has hindered us. The event hasn’t even taken place. As the popular acronym goes, FEAR is False Evidence Appearing Real, which is exactly right. Sure it’s possible that these things may happen, but there is no *evidence* showing that it will happen. It’s also possible that the outcome will be positive and wonderful.

I believe that one of the underlying reasons that we experience fear is that our minds think that we might lose something or experience some kind of pain. In the example above, one might be afraid of losing their self-esteem or confidence. Starting a business is another example where we might experience a fear of loss. We might lose our money, our security, or time.

So the first couple of steps to overcoming fear is to first understand what we are afraid of and then understand that the scenario hasn’t played out yet. All of this might seem obvious to you, but you would be surprised that we don’t think rationally all the time, especially when you’re experiencing this fear first hand.

The real key to overcoming fear is to re-focus on the consequences. Instead of focusing on the negative outcomes, try to focus on the positive outcomes and consider what good things will come from it. Using our example again where you ask someone out on a date.

What if they say yes? What if the worst case scenario is they say “no” but you still become great friends and share wonderful moments together? Sorry guys, the friend-zone is real but it’s not all that bad.

So we can make a decision to ask this person out on a date. We have three possible outcomes: ask them out and get rejected, ask them out and get accepted, or don't ask them out.

**The decision that we often make when we experience fear is that we take no action, which is the *worst* decision.**

*“Go out on a limb. That’s where the fruit is.”* - Jimmy Carter

Many of our goals or plans get hindered because we are afraid of something and our usual ways to deal with fear is to avoid it all together, so we take no action and we avoid it. Asking this person out realistically yields some possibility of acceptance and rejection. Whether they're attractive to you or not, you might be looking at a 50/50 chance, or 30/70, or 70/30, either way there is some chance of them saying yes. But if you avoid it all together you have automatically failed and your chance of acceptance is 0.

Another popular phrase is *“face your fears”* and again this is exactly right. Instead of trying to avoid something because of some irrational scenario that we have created in our minds, think about the wonderful, positive things that can result from taking action. Don't forget the cycle!

## Problem Solving

We're faced with big and small challenges every day in our lives. Often times obstacles get in the way of our success and it's how we deal with those obstacles that decide whether we keep going or if we quit. These challenges come not only mentally, but physically. Allow me to explain...

Let's say you want to achieve the goal of starting a business. You're going to have a lot of obstacles if you want to get that going. There are so many challenges: funding, time, technology, staffing, knowledge, skills, location, research, etc... Despite being one of the hardest projects you can take on, people start businesses every day.

When confronted with obstacles, people will make one of three choices: find a way to fix it, find an alternative, or give up. Those are really your only three choices. If you try starting a business but don't have the money, you can either find a way to get the money, find another business that doesn't require as much money, or give up.

When setting goals, these choices decide your outcome. Unfortunately, when confronted with a lot of obstacles, most people will get overwhelmed and quit, which is the worst choice possible. As I said before, failure is not an option and will likely cause that downward spiral. I think I drilled that 4 step cycle into your head enough, so I'll shut up about that for now.

Taking an alternative is sometimes a good option. If you find it too challenging to start a brick and mortar business, a good alternative might be to start a business online. That's choosing an alternative and it may have less or easier obstacles. Sometimes if your goals are far out of reach, you have to change your goals, and that is ok.

*"There's no reason to have a Plan B because it distracts from Plan A"*  
- Will Smith

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Don't always resort to the alternatives. The best option is to destroy those obstacles. The most successful will choose this path every time. Those with strong wills, motivation, and *maximum belief*, will do everything they can to succeed. Is it because they are stronger or have more potential than you? Not at all. It's because they have an intelligent way of dealing with those obstacles and they are confident that there is always a way to meet their goals.

*"For every problem you can't solve, there is a smaller problem that you CAN solve." - Ron Shatto, my college instructor.*

That's a quote that you can't forget. Ron was talking about computer programming at the time, but I have applied that too many decisions throughout the years. It has changed the way I think about problems, big and small. It's not hard to understand, but it can take some practice. If you break down a problem and ask why you can't solve it, there is *always* a smaller problem that you *can* solve.

A lot of the toxic thinking that I see in people is that they will give up so easily that they actually *search* for reasons why they can't do something. They are sabotaging themselves with their negative beliefs. Has anyone ever asked you for advice only to turn down everything you say by giving excuse after excuse?

*"How do I find the right guy?"*

*"Well you should start meeting people. Hang out with friends more."*

*"But I don't have many friends."*

*"You should try joining a club or a discussion group."*

*"But there aren't any groups that interest me."*

*"Have you tried searching online? Or maybe try online dating?"*

*"There's only losers online and creepy guys."*

Wow, just go do something rather than just coming up with so many excuses. Do you know somebody like this? Is it you? Stop and look at

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some of these obstacles and then apply the idea of breaking down the problem into smaller, solvable, problems. Let's pick an easy one:

*"You should try joining a club or a discussion group."*

*"But there aren't any groups that interest me."*

Let's stop and think about why this is an obstacle.

Problem: *There are no groups that interest me.*

Why? -> New Problems:

1. Because I don't have many interests.
2. I haven't looked in the right places.
3. There really isn't a group that interests me.

Why? -> New Problems:

1. Because I don't have time or haven't found anything I enjoy.
2. Because I haven't looked hard enough or don't know where to look.
3. There's not a lot of groups around here.

Now we can begin to find possible solutions:

1. Devote some time to develop new interests. Try new things! Learn!
2. Research or ask around. There are many places to join groups.
3. Consider starting a group! Online or offline, to meet people.

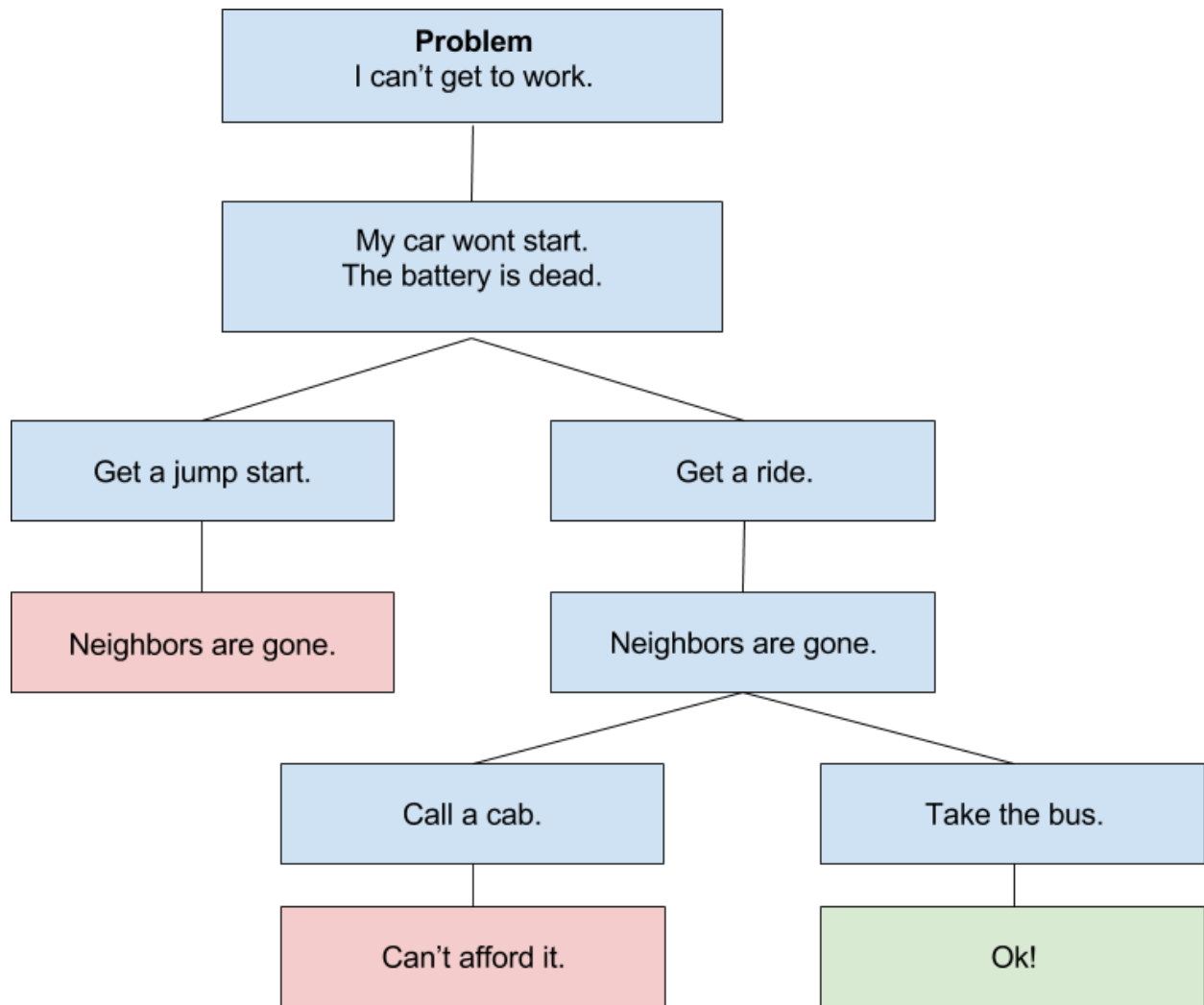
Now this person can find a group or start a new group, meet people and make some friends, or possibly find "the right guy."

Here's an activity for you. Take a blank sheet of paper and write down a couple of problems you are facing right now in your life. Start with one problem and draw a box around it. You're going to make a *tree map* and extend it level by level until you find a solution to your problem or find a small problem that you *can* solve, then work back up from there.

Example:



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## Values

Before you can take action and make good decisions or set goals for yourself, you need to find out what is important to you. You need to discover your values and what is important in your life. Every decision you make will either bring you closer to those values or further away from them. Having a life that doesn't align with your values makes you feel dishonest and ultimately affects your self-esteem. So in order to align your life with your personal values, you need to find out what those values are.

Do you value love over your job?  
Do you value charity over fortune?

The decisions you make will bring you closer to one or the other. If you value love over your job, then working overtime on your anniversary is probably not a good decision for your values. If you value your health over your job, it's probably not a good choice to find a stressful job with little work-life balance.

Once you have a sense of value and discover what is important to you, it will make your decision making much easier. It will make your goals much more accurate as it aligns with your belief system. It will make your actions much more meaningful and rewarding.

## Happiness

I explained earlier what success is and how to pursue it, but it's important to understand that success doesn't determine happiness. There's people that have success, every goal is being met, but they are still unhappy. There are people that have virtually nothing, but still find a way to be happy. You can't earn, find, or buy happiness. It is created by you.

For some reason happiness has been put up on this pedestal as some amazing, hard to obtain, state of being. But it is only an emotion, just like anger, sadness, or excitement. Well it's easy to get those other emotions right? Why does happiness have to be so difficult to get? It doesn't.

Happiness is created. It is a state of emotion that our mind goes to when certain triggers are met. For example, when you get a flat tire what sort of emotion do you get? Depending on your situation you might get angry or frustrated. If you're late for work, you might get anxious or worried. But all of those emotions are triggered by the flat tire or its consequences.

To create happiness you need to set off certain triggers that produce the emotion. So happiness isn't a permanent state that you will stay in 24x7 just by meeting your goals and earning lots of money. You need to set off triggers that produce happiness. The more you surround yourself with those triggers, the more often you will be happy. If those triggers are firing all day long, you will be a happy person.

### **What are the triggers?**

For everyone it's different, but some examples are: hugs, laughter, smiles, positive thinking, security, giving/contributing, love, inspiration, growth, and significance. Let's expand on a few of those that I feel is very important and is a trigger for most people.

Growth. As I said before, we're always changing. We *crave* the feeling of growth and meeting our goals. The feeling of accomplishment or the feeling

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that we have made progress is a happiness inducing trigger. You don't see a sport team getting angry when they win the championship, right? Because they feel accomplished. When you feel yourself progressing and growing, you feel happy. What if you accomplished something new every day and every day you could feel yourself grow or meet goals? You would be happy a lot!

Giving and contributing. This is an important one because it's a powerful feeling, no matter who you are. Have you ever given some spare change or a few dollars to someone in need? Have you ever donated to a charity? How about given a gift to someone? How good do you feel knowing that you contributed? It's most impactful when the person needed that contribution or when you made a huge difference in their life. That is another feeling of happiness.

You know what I do when I'm feeling a bit depressed? I give a few dollars or buy some food for someone on the street. I also keep a little plastic bag of snacks in my car, then I will add something to that bag whenever possible. When the bag fills up with goodies, I will give it to someone in need. I make myself happy and someone gets helped. It's a great feeling.

I remember one time a few years ago my wife and I went out to dinner. It was very late, probably around midnight and it was cold outside- low 30's. We went to a local restaurant that was open 24 hours. A few tables down from us was a homeless man. He looked very tired and down, but he was quiet and kept to himself. This man was dressed in rags and looked like he had been on the streets for a while. He seemed very content with his situation and there was something about him that inspired me because, despite his misfortune, I could tell he was a good guy.

He was polite to the server and had great manners. He pulled out some change to order a coffee. We had gotten our food and started eating. A few minutes went by and he sat there sipping his coffee, not bothering or staring at anyone. I started to feel bad. Here I was, enjoying a nice hot meal and he probably just wanted to get warm. I asked the server to bring

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the man a menu and said he could order anything he wanted. “*Are you sure?*” she asked, surprised. I guess that sort of thing doesn’t happen often.

She brought him a menu and he looked up at her, surprised, when she told him that we were buying him dinner. I’ll never forget his reaction. He looked over at us and said, “*Are you sure? Oh my god you guys, thank you so much! Can I order the T-bone steak? Is that ok? Are you sure?*” I was actually touched that he still asked even after she said he could get *anything*. He didn’t even order dessert. I was prepared for him to order 3 meals to go or groceries for the week.

Here’s a guy that didn’t ask for anything and didn’t bother anyone. When given the opportunity to get anything he wanted, he only took what he needed and nothing more. I had to try hard not to start crying in middle of the restaurant because I felt so happy to see this man get a nice hot meal and the joy and authenticity in his reaction was overwhelming. Before we left, I tipped the waitress 50% and gave the guy \$10 on my way out. He continued to thank me.

I wasn’t rich by any means, but this was a time that happiness and contribution became much more important than money. The feeling of giving to someone in need crushes any feeling that money can bring you. It’s like a drug. By giving this guy some food, I was compelled to give him another \$10 and was then compelled to tip the waitress a generous \$20.

No matter how poor you think you are, giving to those that need it more than you will make you feel wealthy. Contribute to a good cause every day and you will create happiness, not just for yourself, but many others.

Back to my point. Happiness is an emotion that *you* create for yourself. The secret to happiness is to find these triggers and then fill your life with them. If hugs make you happy, make it a ritual to hug people every day. Hug your wife, your husband, your kids, your parents, your siblings, or even your pets. If smiles make you happy, smile at everyone, even if you’re not happy at the time, just smile. Smile at *yourself*. Right now, smile.

## Digging Deeper

As you search for these triggers that create happiness and positivity throughout your day, it is important to stop and think about them and analyze them closely. You should become familiar why they make you feel good. Think about what part of them makes you feel good. You might find that you can find other triggers that offer the same feeling.

Let's take hugging for example. What part of hugging makes you feel good? Is it just the touch? Maybe, but then you would have the same feeling by hugging a tree or a stop sign. Is it the feeling of connection with someone you love? Maybe, but why does it sometimes feel good to hug strangers? If you've never hugged a stranger, you should try it, in a non-creepy, non-perverse way. Hugs are complicated, but if you find out what exactly makes it feel good, you might be able to find other triggers that create a similar feeling.

For the record, I still haven't figured out hugs, but my wife and I believe it's a mutual mystery. It may be the combined feeling of trust and the feeling of giving. Remember, giving feels good, so with a hug you are giving and receiving. Knowing this, I can say the trigger may actually be the act of giving. So maybe if you don't have any money or good to give someone in need, maybe ask them for a hug and see how happy it will make both of you!

You should also consider associations; by that I mean words and objects that trigger a specific memory or emotion. If you have a picture hanging on your wall of an ex-lover that brings a lot of painful memories, you may want to consider removing that picture and storing it away. Replace it with a picture of someone or something that brings positive memories.

## Activities and Challenges

We know the hardest part about this whole personal development project is taking those first steps- taking action. So I'm going to help you get started by giving you some ideas for projects. These projects are meant to motivate you and to help discover what you truly want out of life. If you complete all of these activities, you should feel the cycle start to occur. You can also use these activities as a way to enhance your mood, relieve stress, and re-motivate yourself for the future. Let's make that your first goal- finish these activities.

### **Standard and Goals**

Take the next week or so and think about what you truly want out of life. Think specifically what kind of job you want or what kind of health, family, or income you want for yourself. Write it all down and be specific. Are you in debt? How much money do you need to become financially comfortable? Want a new job? Write all of the wonderful things you want out of a job. Write down your values and see how those things align with your values.

Once you do that, start coming up with a plan. Come up with goals that will bring you closer to that standard of living and think about the positive outcome to build incentive. Memorize the 4 step cycle and think about the actions that you can take given your unlimited potential. Think positive, overcome fears, and get started on progressing towards your goals and growth!

## Life Comparison Chart

This is an activity that will allow you to discover how you want your life to look when you meet your goals. It will give you a blueprint on how you feel your life should look. Take a few minutes, or longer if needed, and create two, side-by-side lists of the different aspects of your life.

On the left side, list all of the things in your life that you're already happy with or that you're proud of. These can be relationships, your job, your friends, a particular talent or skill, or your health. On the right side, right down all of the things that you're unhappy with- the things that you want to change.

Once you're done, write down why or how you got to that position. What led you to have that bad job or that relationship? Then look at your reasoning.

Did you blame others or did you take responsibility?

Think about the decisions that got you there. Then take those negative things and think about the alternative decisions you could have made to arrive at a different result. Consider the fact that it's not too late to change those actions and fix your situation.

## Vision Board

You already know about this one. This is how you visualize your goals and your future. This is how you motivate yourself and give yourself some incentive to strive for. Have fun with this and take your time. Make it a piece of art that you are proud of and can display it. You don't have to show it off, but it should be something that you wouldn't mind looking at every day.

Remember that it is OK to change it or even redo the entire thing as time goes on, but whatever you do, don't get rid of it!



## **Problem solving tree map**

I showed you this in the problem solving section. By completing this activity, you will have a much better understanding for how to solve complex problems and overcome obstacles. You may want to do this map on paper until you gain the ability to analyze your problems mentally. It's a very valuable skill to be able to take your difficult, everyday problems and break them down into smaller, solvable, problems.

## **Triggers and Associations**

Make a list of emotional triggers and positive associations. Find a list of triggers for good and bad emotions. Then think about how you can adjust your daily actions to increase the good triggers and decrease the bad ones. Remember to think about the emotions that are created and see if you can *dig deeper* to find other things that can fulfill those same emotions.

Example: smiles, hugs, music, or heirlooms.

## **Clean and Organize**

Yuck chores! I'm serious though, clean up your home. Get everything organized and dusted. A clean living condition increases your mood, your self-esteem, and reduces stress. If you want to go a step further, grab a scented candle and light that baby up. I promise you that you will feel much better for days if you live in a clean environment.

## Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to read through this guide. I hope that you were able to learn a few things and even change your way of thinking. If I have helped you improve your life in some way, I have succeeded and I would love to hear your stories and feedback on how this guide has helped you or your friends and family. Your feedback is very valuable to me and I plan to use it to improve my future books.

**Always keep in mind that *you* are in control. Only *you* can create happiness and success in your life.**