

BELIEVE IT!

BECOME IT!

MODULE TWELVE



BELIEVE IT!

BECOME IT!

MODULE 12

BECOME IT!

As we pursue our goals we should keep in mind that they are powerful means to an end, but not the ultimate purpose of our lives. Goals are tools to help us develop our talents, achieve our maximum potential and focus forward.

A study completed in 1996, by Emmons and Kaiser, revealed that working toward goals is critical to “life satisfaction.” However, achieving goals by themselves doesn’t provide long-term happiness. That’s achieved in the process of becoming – as you learn and grow, as you hurdle obstacles and meet challenges - as you discover your inner strength and also your dependence on God. The deepest and most long-lasting sense of joy and fulfillment comes not from achieving goals of material value, but from learning how to love (God, yourself and others) and contribute in meaningful ways to your fellow man and to the world.

In truth, we are constantly in a state of becoming. Never will there be a time that either you or I can declare, “*Now I have become!*” And that’s good news because it means we can continue learning, growing, and progressing as long as we have breath. We can continue setting goals and improving ourselves, no matter how old we are!

I’d like to share highlights from the stories of people who believed it and became it. These are just a few of the many respondents to a survey that asked:

1. Briefly describe your accomplishment.
2. What techniques or specific thoughts helped you through the tough moments?
3. What advice would you give a person wanting to accomplish the same goal?

Janette, age 54:

In May of 1996, I was viciously attacked and mauled by 2 dogs while the drunken owner of the dogs stood by. I sustained multiple bites and lacerations and was rendered helpless on the ground. Through the courageous help of my 23 year old daughter and divine intervention, I was rescued. This experience caused me to develop a severe case of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which left me mentally disabled. Previous to this experience I had my own real estate business and was listed among the top 1% of realtors nationwide, based on income. After this experience, I could not even leave my own

BELIEVE IT!

BECOME IT!

home. I suffered from severe panic attacks, hallucination and sleep deprivation. I lost my ability to work with numbers and follow a simple cooking recipe. I totally lost my business and my feelings of self worth. Needless to say, I developed serious depression.

From the beginning, I relied upon my dear family for support. Then, after months turned into years, I felt I was a burden and not a blessing. I pulled away and felt very alone.

The first 2 ½ years after this experience, I spent in counseling and court. The court system left me feeling more personally attacked and vulnerable than the dogs. I received professional counseling and also help from God.

Now, 6 ½ years later, I am at peace. I feel that I am a contributing member of my family and society. No, I am not a professional Realtor. I still have PTSD and cannot confront aggressive dogs. Nor have I chosen to return to full time employment. What I have chosen to “be” is a fantastic wife to my loving husband and a magnificent mother and grandmother to 4 amazing children and 8 grandchildren. I have chosen to “be” cheerful as I fulfill my domestic duties and nurturing opportunities. And, I now gratefully sleep through the night.

My greatest accomplishment is what I am learning along this long journey...those precious truths that I now know. Each lesson has come at great personal cost and effort and I treasure each one. I have learned that it is only through adversity that man comes to know God. To this day, I continue to learn and feel profound gratitude for my adversity.

Jeff, age 49, shares how he and his wife “not only survived but thrived” during her bout with stage three breast cancer. His suggestions:

- *Trust in the Lord.* Cancer is so overwhelming, unpredictable, and uncontrollable that at first we were frightened and despairing. But then we gave the cancer to the Lord and let Him worry about it. We felt ourselves encircled in the arms of His love. We weren't assured of a cure but were assured of His love.
- *Appreciate every day.* With 8-9 months of chemo, surgery, chemo again, and then radiation my wife had many trials. But we learned to appreciate every day, especially the good days, as a gift and miracle from God.
- *Focus on what you can do, not what you can't do.* During chemo my wife's immune system was so low that she couldn't leave the house. Instead of bemoaning her confinement, my wife was happy that she could not spend time doing photo albums or reading to our five-year-old son. Instead of bemoaning the fact that I was given all of the outside household responsibility, I rejoiced that I had an excuse to spend so much more time with my children.
- *Keep things in perspective.* After dealing with this big trial, we came to realize that

BELIEVE IT!

BECOME IT!

most of the other things in life that were frustrating were little annoyances not worthy of our negative emotion.

- *Set priorities.* In reality, all of us suffer from a terminal disease...life. Our days in mortality are numbered. Cancer helped us to see that clearly, so we began to make better choices about how we spent our days.

Cheryl, age 24:

I recovered from chronic illness and depression and overcome a drug dependency. What helped me going through the tough moments was that I imagined great stories to parallel and describe the struggles that were going on inside of me. The difficulties I was facing, the internal struggles and pain (physical and emotional), the cravings for the drugs, and the depression and fear that assailed me were the terrible monsters that I, as the hero of the story, had to conquer, and even more important, it was my task to establish and create a richly beautiful world inside myself. How many true heroes happily signed up for their difficult tasks, after all?

I am working toward the creation of something positive instead of merely the eradication of the negative. I have found that my thoughts and beliefs have physical effects on my body. The more I pay attention to this phenomenon, the more I am able to see it. This does not mean that an illness or addiction is “all in your mind.” Rather, it means that your body, mind, emotions, etc. are all part of an incredible, intelligent creation-in-process that actually has the capacity to guide its own creation. So many people seem to think that their life doesn't matter much. They would be uncomfortable with the idea that their lives are really epic in proportion. I believe the truth is that we are powerful people, with the capability of creating something beautiful and full of joy. We are all adventures. Life is rich.

Becky Anne, age 19:

I personally overcame an eating disorder. It began with an “innocent” obsession to exercise and a restrictive diet. I had decided to spend my summer training for my upcoming volleyball season. After losing a lot of weight and reaching an athletic peak, I liked my results, but continually craved foods that were “off limits.” Losing all internal cues of hunger, I fell into the dangerous cycle of bingeing and purging.

I tried to think of long-term effects, all the while focusing on the small victories and baby steps. I would remind myself that if I let these problems persist it would severely affect my physical health – my ability to consistently perform mentally and athletically, my ability to have children, etc. I tried not to let setbacks get me down. Each day was a new opportunity to improve and get better. I continually prayed for help, but especially in

BELIEVE IT!

BECOME IT!

moments of weakness. I increased my serve to others so I could forget about myself. In fact, while recognizing and continually acknowledging the problem, I tried to forget about my food and exercise obsessions completely. I wouldn't let my mind dwell on food, exercise, my figure, or anything associated. I planned out a balanced exercise schedule and stuck with it, and then tried to regain those natural cues of hunger and satiety. Though it took along time, with many moments of despair and defeat mixed in, I was finally able to trust myself. It felt so good to regain that control and confidence in myself.

I would recommend that a person wanting to accomplish the same goal do the same things I did, such as: take small steps to small victories while focusing on the long-term effects of their decisions; serve others to forget themselves; get in tune with their spiritual side and plea for help; and ultimately focus on finding a natural balance pertaining to exercise and diet. One thing that I did not do until after struggling alone for a long time was to confide in a trusted friend, sibling, parent, etc. I would recommend that those hoping to accomplish the same goal should do this more quickly than I so as not to feel isolated and alone. Hiding your problem only increases the negative effects as you put up a front and avoid questioning. Having that extra support will strengthen and comfort you, and when you lose confidence in yourself you have one more resource to turn to.

David, age 24:

For quiet awhile I hated my step-father. While he was dating my mom he was very nice to me. Once they got married, however, he would lecture me incessantly and ruin any social activity I tried to participate in. There was always something I was doing wrong. It seemed like just about everything he did told me how unimportant I was. One day my parents came home and told me they had bought a house about 80 miles away just because they liked it. They never bothered to ask for any input from me. For the next two years, I commuted about 180 miles a day to high school and back. My stepfather even "helped" me get a demeaning, minimum wage job that was awful. Consequently I hated him. Just hearing him say anything made me boil inside. Now, however, I get along well with him and even consider him a good friend. There isn't even any awkwardness between us.

To get rid of the anger I had to let go of everything I was so mad at him for. I tried to look for the ways that he would use to show me that he cared. Noticing just a few of these helped me to forgive those things I had deemed unforgivable. My plan of action was to minimize confrontation and try to focus on other things. Once I decided that I wanted things to be better, it was my plan to not let anything bother me, and to always keep a positive attitude about our relationship.

BELIEVE IT!
BECOME IT!

My advice? Let go of the hate. Letting yourself be consumed by hate only makes you unable to do anything else. You have a choice of how to respond. Look for the good in people and learn not to dwell on negative things.

Jamilyn, age 25, from California:

About 5 years ago I was diagnosed with a rare blood disorder. There were no treatments or medication made available to me. I was in the darkest point of my life. I did not know if I was going to live or die. I was young and filled with so much life. I felt as if it has been ripped from my grasp and there was nothing I could do to change it. However, I fought and I am still alive today! I am able to find joy in life. I am viable and living.

There were points of time during my illness that I did not think I could live another day this way. I went from being a fun loving, carefree, free spirit to sleeping almost 18 hours a day, every day, for a couple years. I gained a tremendous amount of weight. Everything that brought joy to my life was suddenly something I was not longer able to participate in. It hit me almost over night. I can distinctly remember the day I started feeling sick. I felt like I had been in a terrible accident and it was the next day. I could not function. I could not even sit up long enough nor did I have the energy to read. My youngest sister would sit on the bed next to me and read to me. I tried to think of things I was grateful for on a regular basis. I must admit there were many days that I could not think of anything that I was grateful for!

What advice would I give? Never give up! You never know why these things happen until way after they are done. Even then you may never know why this needed to come to pass. But through every trial you become a better person if you let yourself become better. You need to focus on others. You need to lose yourself in service and you will find happiness. When you let yourself get so wrapped up in “you,” you stand to lose everything. Through hard things great things can come to pass. Never give up looking for a solution to the problem. Do anything in your power to change a situation you are not happy with. I have become more than I was. I have learned compassion and empathy towards people who are suffering. I refocused my goals.

So inspiring are the stories of men and women who hurdle barriers and overcome obstacles on their way to success! What sets them apart from those who live discontented lives, wasting their years in unhappiness?

The difference lies in people's ability to **believe that they can** create positive change in their lives; in their **knowledge of how** to do it, and in their **will to become** their ideal selves.

BELIEVE IT!

BECOME IT!

This is illustrated by the well-known story of the eagle:

One day a naturalist inquired of a farmer why an eagle, the king of all birds, was confined in the barnyard with the chickens.

The farmer replied, "I nursed the injured little bird back to health and have raised it in the barnyard with the chickens. It has never learned to fly," replied the owner. "The fine bird eats chicken food and behaves as chickens behave. I don't think it will ever fly."

"I disagree!" argued the naturalist, "It has the heart of an eagle and can surely be taught to fly!"

After talking it over, the two men agreed to find out whether this was possible. Gently the naturalist took the eagle in his arms and said, "You belong to the sky and not to the earth. Stretch forth your wings and fly!"

The eagle, however, saw the chickens eating and jumped down to join them.

The following day the naturalist took the eagle up on the roof of the house and urged him again, saying, "You are an eagle! Stretch forth your wings and fly!" But the eagle was afraid and jumped down to the familiar chicken coop.

On the third day the naturalist rose early and took the eagle out of the barnyard to the top of a mountain. There he held the majestic bird high in the air and encouraged him again, declaring, "You are an eagle - king of all birds! Stretch forth your wings now and fly!"

The eagle looked down at the barnyard below and then up to the sky. Still he did not fly. Then the naturalist lifted him straight toward the sun and the eagle began to tremble. Slowly he spread his magnificent wings. And sounding a triumphant cry, the mighty eagle soared toward the heavens.

Just like the eagle, if you have thought of yourself as something that you *aren't*, you can make the choice to *become what you really are!*

You may have made the mistake of accepting false beliefs and living as if they were true. The *real* truth is, however, you are like the eagle - with the potential to soar, and to be free to experience joyful living. Remember, you must believe in the person you want to become. Believe it, and you'll become it!