

BELIEVE IT!

BECOME IT!

MODULE THREE



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CHAPTER 3

Power Belief #2 “I Am Joyful and Confident”

**“Happiness depends upon ourselves.”
Aristotle**

Think for a moment about the people you most admire in your life. To whom are you drawn? Usually it's the joyful ones who smile, laugh, compliment others and radiate happiness.

I Create My Own Happiness

Happiness is all about focus. Whatever you focus on pulls you in that direction, either negative or positive. So the secret to happiness is to *choose* to focus on the positive in life, no matter what. Abraham Lincoln said, “Folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be.” I'd say President Lincoln was an expert at creating his own happiness, wouldn't you? Time and time again, that amazing man refused to let failure keep him from success.

Clinton, age 35, from Balga, Western Australia, is another extraordinary man. Although stricken with severe cerebral palsy, Clinton shares his joyful heart freely. When asked how he keeps going through the tough times he answered, “I always thought positive thoughts, I always have a happy outlook on life, and I always pray to God.”

There is an amazing amount of research that verifies Lincoln's belief about creating our own happiness. Here is just a sample:

An experiment conducted in 1994 at Stanford University by S. Lyubomirsky, concluded that: “Happy people do not experience one success after another and unhappy people, one failure after another. Instead, surveys show that happy and unhappy people tend to have had very similar life experiences. The difference is that the average unhappy person spends more than twice as much time thinking about unpleasant events in their lives, while happy people tend to seek and rely upon information that brightens their personal outlook.”

“Studies find that happy people experience much the same range of events as unhappy people. The real difference is in what they define as positive and negative. Happy people are those who use a lower threshold in order to label an event positive” (Parducci, 1995).

“Those who regularly ruminate over negative subjects and unhappiness are 70% less likely to feel content than those who do not” (Scott and McIntosh, 1999).

“People who like what they have are twice as likely to be happy as those who actually have the

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most” (Sirgy, Cole, Kosenko and Meadow, 1995).

“Researchers found that having a positive attitude about those around us is among the most important predictors of life satisfaction and that without such attitudes, we are less than half as likely to feel happy” (Glass and Jolly, 1997).

“Over 9 in 10 Americans are uncomfortable or worried about aspects of the world and of society. The difference between more and less happy people is what they do with that discomfort. Less happy people wallow in the problems they see, while happier people focus on potential improvements in the future (Garrett, 1996).

“A study of life satisfaction looked at twenty different factors that might contribute to happiness. Nineteen of those factors did matter, and one did not. The one factor that did not matter was financial status”(Hong and Duff, 1995).

Studies of older Americans find that one of the best predictors of happiness is whether a person considers his or her life to have a purpose. Without a clearly defined purpose, seven in ten individuals feel unsettled about their lives; with a purpose, almost seven in ten feel satisfied (Lepper, 1996).

In a study of adult self-esteem, researchers found that people who are happy with themselves take defeat and explain it away, treating it as an isolated incident that indicates nothing about their ability. People who are unhappy take defeat and enlarge it, making it stand for who they are and using it to predict the outcome of future life events (Brown and Dutton, 1995).

In research on older Americans, what predicted satisfaction more than finances or the state of their current relationships was their willingness to adapt. If they were willing to change some of their habits and expectations, their happiness was maintained even when their circumstances changed. Those who were resistant to change, on the other hand, were less than one-third to feel happy (Clark, Carlson, Zemke, Gelya, Patterson, and Ennevor, 1996).

How can we focus on the positive? Exactly what do we think that helps us create happiness? Here are several ideas:

1. **Think *gratitude*.** Instead of looking at what you don't have, pay attention to what you *do* have and to the good things about your life.

For example, when you begin to think thoughts like, “Man, I wish I had a car like that!” Just catch yourself and think, *Hey, no matter how fast his car can go, the speed limit is 65 for all of us! My car is great, and I'm OK.*

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Another one: “She is so gorgeous! I’ll never look like her because I was born with a shape like a pear!” Again, stop and think, *I’m so glad I’m healthy. I like my life and every day I’m making it better and better!*

Dale Carnegie once remarked, “Happiness doesn’t depend on outward conditions. It depends on inner conditions. It isn’t what we have or who we are, or what we are doing that makes us happy or unhappy. It’s what we think about it. For example, two people may be in the same place, doing the same thing, at the same time, and yet one is miserable and the other happy. Why? Because of a different mental attitude.” And that attitude is **gratitude**.

Mr. Carnegie would enjoy the results of an experiment completed in Washington D.C. by J.

Brebner, in 1995: “Happy people and unhappy people explain the world differently. When an unhappy person must interpret the world, 8 in 10 times he or she will see the negative in an event. When a happy person must interpret the world, 8 in 10 times he or she will see the positive.” (12)

That experiment was validated by Teresa, age 39, when she said, “I tried to remove thoughts of being a ‘victim’ of my circumstances to that of being a ‘student.’ Every time I felt like a victim, I felt sorry for myself and disempowered. When I was able to shift my perspective to being *grateful for the lessons I was learning*, I was able to shift my mind into feeling positive and hopeful. I believe that pain in life is inevitable, but misery is optional.”

People who have experienced similar life events can wind up with nearly opposite perceptions of life satisfaction. Researchers have compared, for example, people who have received a job promotion, and they found that while some of the people treasure the opportunity, others lament the added responsibility. The implications of life events are a matter of perspective (Chen, 1996).

I’d like to share a personal experience that significantly affected my level of gratitude. In May, 2001, I attended the annual conference of the World Movement of Mothers, held that year at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. This marvelous group of women, organized in 1949, has the distinction of being the first non-government organization to influence the policy-making at the United Nations. Their hearts are good and their mission is to honor motherhood and strengthen families worldwide.

At that conference my heart was touched as I listened to stories of women who literally help change the world. The representative from France spoke about character-strengthening classes in their schools. She explained that all French school children learn ethics from their earliest years. Commendable! And the Swedish representative spoke about stay-at-home moms in her country

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who receive social security when their children are raised. Admirable!

But the woman who changed my perspective forever lives in Mali, West Africa. She courageously stood and described the difficult living conditions in her country. She explained that open sewage runs through her village. And in her village there are dirt floors in the huts, lean-to structures, and caves where they live. What does she do to strengthen families in her country? She buries the dead aids victims and then raises their children. Currently, in her cave, she tenderly nurtures many children.

As I listened, my heart filled with love and empathy for this extraordinary woman, and her story prompted an overwhelming feeling of gratitude for my countless blessings. However, at the same time, I felt ashamed of the many things I take for granted each day of my life. Oh, what a valuable perspective we acquire when we develop an attitude of gratitude!

- 2. Offer love and kindness.** We have all seen the magical effects of love and kindness in our lives and the lives of others. It seems as though the giver is always more blessed than the receiver; for as we love, we are loved and it becomes easier to love.

Mother Teresa said, "Spread love wherever you go. Give love to your husband, your wife, your children, to your next door neighbor. Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness. Kindness in your eyes, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting."

In the book *Heart of Goodness*, JoAnne Larsen tells the story of a young nursing school student who buzzed through a test until she came to the last question, which completely stymied her. The question: "What was the first name of the school's head custodian?" Well, the student didn't know, nor did anyone else. When asked by a classmate whether the last question would count toward their grade, the professor said, "Absolutely!" teaching the class that, as nurses, they would cross paths with people from every walk of life; all of whom had ultimate value. And, thus, all people were worthy of the nurses' utmost care and consideration, even if their efforts consisted of a gesture so small as a smile and a greeting. Describing her experience as a lesson never forgotten, the student relates that she still remembers the custodian's name, which she later learned. It was Dorothy.

I remember Etienne de Grellet's words:

I shall pass through this life but once.
Any good, therefore, that I can do

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Or any kindness I can show to any fellow creature,
Let me do it now.
Let me not deter or neglect it,
For I shall not pass this way again.

A final thought on creating joy and confidence, from John Wesley:
“Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the souls you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, and with all the zeal you can, as long as ever you can.” (*Heart of Goodness*, 2000, foreword).

3. **Be others-centered**, instead of self-centered. Look through windows, seeing the needs of others, instead of mirrors, seeing your own needs.

This principle is magical. When you focus on others, your problems diminish, you're happier, and well-loved. An old saying is, “All that you send into the lives of others comes back into your own.”

This principle embraces patience, forgiving quickly, serving others gladly, noticing other's needs before your own, and seeking to understand before you try to be understood. These are simple, yet profound “guarantees” for happiness.

The best way to be others-centered is to treat people the way you'd want them to treat you. Think deeply about the people in your life's circle, one by one. Think about what it would be like to *be* those people, with their life experiences, their needs and desires. For example, at the end of a long, frustrating day - as you're walking in the door of your home and all you can think about is food and relaxation, what if one of your loved ones is upset? Can you immediately put aside all thoughts of self and focus only on that person's concerns? Can you be sincerely compassionate, rather than annoyed at the inconvenience?

God's Little Devotional Book for Leaders (1997), tells of a young man who made great personal sacrifices as he kindly reached out to help strangers.

When Chris Gross of Santa Clara, California, heard about the 137 children who lost at least one parent in the bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City, he thought, “*Where would I be if my folks weren't around when I was growing up?*” With that motivation, he set up a college fund for those children. His first step was to call the CEO of his company and explain his intentions, and that he would be donating his annual salary as an investment analyst – all \$53,874 of it – to the fund. He then challenged his company and eighteen others to match his gift, so that the fund might reach one million dollars. “It's not easy living without a

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paycheck,” Gross admitted, but the 26 year-old had no debts and lived frugally with four roommates.

Word of Gross' sacrificial gift quickly spread through the central coast region of California, and many residents responded with personal gifts. Several benefit shows, concerts and seminars were held, including benefits by the San Francisco Opera and the San Francisco Giants. Can one man make a difference? In four months the fund Gross established grew to \$525,000!

Pam, age 59, hurdled her shyness 'barrier' by focusing on others. She explained:

I overcame extreme shyness and feelings of inferiority that made it almost impossible for me to do anything in front of people such as teach, speak, etc. One of the major things I tried to do was focus on others, their feelings and needs rather than my discomfort. The more I was able to do this, the more I recognized that no one else really paid attention to how I looked or sounded, they were more concerned with themselves.

I didn't feel qualified to serve as some others did in large, spectacular ways, but I knew I could do small acts of service and do them consistently. Whenever I felt inferior, I reminded myself that even insignificant acts add up and contribute to the whole.

To evaluate your level of other-centeredness, take a quick three-question quiz and answer in your mind “true or false.”

- When someone gives a compliment to another person, it makes me think I'm not as good. (Rejoice with the person; it's no reflection on you)
 - I worry that everyone will notice my weight/wrinkles/baldness. (Don't focus on yourself - no one else does!)
 - I'm so embarrassed because I'm not a very good computer technician /secretary/ teacher. (Your focus shouldn't be on your embarrassment, but rather on how you can improve your skills and thus contribute more).
4. **Be flexible and cheerful.** Choosing to be flexible is choosing to focus on the positive. People who adapt well and who are cheerful, no matter what's happening around them, are appreciated and well-loved. There are many times in our lives when we simply aren't in control of the situation. Our ability to adapt well is an indicator of our strength of character. A saying I learned when I was

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young is, "Be pretty if you are, be wise if you can, but be cheerful if it kills you!"

Change is an inevitable part of life. We have choices relative to the change going on in our lives – we can be flexible and bend graciously, or we can fight it and be unhappy. Again, these are choices. In retrospect, we usually see even the most jolting of life changes as "catalysts" for growth.

What we are talking about here, over and over, really, is simply our attitudes.

Roberto De Vincenzo, upon completing a golf tournament, was approached by a woman who stated her daughter had leukemia and pled for money to pay medical bills – money he produced. Later, a friend told De Vincenzo the woman's daughter wasn't ill – she had lied to him. In response, Roberto replied, "The child is well? My friend, that's the best news I ever heard!"

General Dwight D. Eisenhower paid a visit to front-line troops during WWII and braved rain and ankle-deep mud to address the men from a makeshift platform. After finishing, as he turned to go, Eisenhower slipped from the platform and sprawled in the mud, sparking the soldiers to roar with laughter. The commanding major general accompanying Eisenhower helped him to his feet, apologizing profusely for his men's behavior. "It's all right," the President responded. "That fall probably helped their morale much more than my speech!" (Remen, *Heart of Goodness*, 2000).

Cheerfulness is an attitude!

ATTITUDE

By Charles Swindoll

The longer I live the more I realize
the impact of attitude on life.

Attitude to me, is more important than facts,
it is more important than the past, than education,
than money, than circumstances, than failures,
than successes, than what other people think or say or do.
It is more important than appearances, giftedness or skill.

It will make or break a company, a church, a home.

The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding
the attitude we embrace for that day.

We cannot change our past, we cannot change the fact
that people will act in a certain way.

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We cannot change the inevitable.
The other thing we can do is play on the one string
we have, and that is our attitude.
I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me
and 90% how I react to it

Michael, age 53, from Elkhart, Indiana, is an extraordinary example of this virtue. At age 16, he was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis. This chronic disease progressed and severely affected his hands and feet. It frequently attacks his other joints as well. Daily he suffers excruciating pain and severe loss of function. He cheerfully explained:

I am, and always have been an optimist! I also figure that there are some things I cannot control, so I make the best of what I have to work with. I can mope and cry and complain, or I can just say, "This is not going to beat me!" and do what I need/want to do. I choose the latter course. I have been in many medical facilities and I've seen a lot of people in worse condition than I am, so I thank God I can do what I can. My advice to others is to think positively. Pace yourself. Know your physical limits. Ask for help and don't give up.

Career analysts find that 83 percent of mid-career professionals believe chance played a significant role in their ultimate career path and that they highly value staying open for unexpected opportunities (Williams, Soeprapto, Like, Touradji, Hess, and Hill, 1998).

5. Be passionate about something. People who open their eyes each morning and immediately look forward to something that they're passionate about are usually more satisfied, happy and hopeful people who focus on the positive. How do we become passionate about something? We develop it the same way we develop any virtue - love, kindness, patience – we practice it. Look at your life and find something that you really enjoy doing. Schedule time in for things you love doing and make them a priority in your life. You can give better from your 'overflow,' so fill your cup!

William, age 64, in Dallas, Texas, is deeply passionate about his work. His story is an example to us all.

One day, William, an experienced designer, was asked by a client to build a large, elaborate model. It called for several building interiors and hundreds of human figures. The model was to be created in a scale of one inch to five feet, which meant that each of the human figures was only a little more than an inch in height. Each one had to be hand-painted, using a brush with a single hair. As William hunched over his table one day, painstakingly painting the figures and then carefully gluing them in place, one of his employees asked him, "Don't you

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find this tedious?"

The designer replied, "Tedious? My goodness, no! I've loved making and painting models ever since I made my first model airplane at age seven. I just can't believe someone is actually paying me to do this!"

From golfers to professional singers, those who *excel* are passionate about their interest.

From an early age, Larry lived and breathed golf. As a teenager, he was ranked one of the top 16 young golfers in the nation. Then, at the beginning of his senior year of high school, Larry was in an automobile accident. He suffered severe injuries, but the most devastating was that his left arm had to be amputated just below the elbow.

After several months of practice with a prosthetic hand, Larry hit a ball. When it landed more than 200 yards away, he knew he could do it. He rejoined his high school team, scoring even better than before, and was awarded a college scholarship.

"Don't think of your missing limb as something that makes you a lesser person," Larry once told an audience of children who had lost limbs. "Think of it as something that can make you stronger. I would love to be the first pro golfer with a prosthetic hand. But I also know that if I don't succeed, I won't be a failure. We only fail if we don't try."

In her autobiography, Dolly Parton wrote,

My high school was small. So during our graduation event, each of us got a chance to stand up and announce our plans for the future. "I'm going to junior college," one boy said. "I'm getting married and moving to Maryville," a girl followed. When my turn came, I said, "I'm going to Nashville to become a star!" The entire place erupted in laughter. I was stunned. Somehow, though, that laughter instilled in me an even greater determination to realize my dream.

Another sterling example of passion is Wilma Rudolph. She simply loved to run.

Wilma was born into a very poor family in a shack in the backwoods of Tennessee. She was the 20th of 22 children, prematurely born and frail. Her survival was doubtful. When she was four years old she had double pneumonia and scarlet fever – a deadly combination that left her with a paralyzed and useless left leg. She had to wear an iron leg brace. Yet she was fortunate to have a mother who encouraged her.

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Wilma's mother told her daughter that despite the brace and injured leg, she could do whatever she wanted to do with her life. She told her that all she needed to do was have faith, persistence, courage and indomitable spirit.

So at nine years old, Wilma removed the leg brace and took the step the doctors told her she'd never take normally. During the next four years, she developed a rhythmic stride and set a goal to become the world's greatest woman runner.

At age 13, Wilma entered a race and came in dead last. She entered every race in high school, and in every race she came in last. Friends begged her to quit. However, one day, she came in next to last. And then, there came a day when Wilma won her first race, and she never looked back.

Years later, at the Olympic Games, Wilma was pitted against the greatest woman runner of the day, Jutta Heine, from Germany. Jutta Heine had never lost a race. However, Wilma beat her in the 100-meter dash and the 200-meter dash, winning two gold medals.

Finally, it was time for the 400-meter relay. It would be Wilma against Jutta once again. The first two runners on Wilma's team made perfect handoffs with the baton. But when the third runner passed the baton to Wilma, she dropped it, and Wilma watched Jutta take off down the track. It seemed impossible that anyone could catch this fleet and nimble woman. But Wilma did just that, and earned her third Olympic gold medal!

I Create Positive Self-beliefs with Good Self-talk

"Self-talk," the way we talk to ourselves in our minds, plays a hugely significant role in determining our level of happiness and confidence. Why? Because we usually become what we tell ourselves we are. Indeed, speaking to ourselves positively is the most effective way to create positive self-beliefs.

Since we now understand the power of choice and the power of our minds, we know that our thoughts can be directed. Why would we allow negativity to pull us backwards into undesirable states, or allow the programming of our past to control our present and future? With effort and perseverance, we can re-direct our thoughts and enjoy positive self-beliefs.

To do this, use the same steps (we discussed earlier) that direct thoughts in positive ways. Just as soon as negative thoughts enter your mind:

1. Label

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2. Replace
3. Focus Forward

Here's how:

1. "This rain stinks! Now I can't play golf!"
Label/Replace/Forward Focus
Gee, that was a negative attitude. We really need the rain and I can play golf tomorrow.
2. "My boss just doesn't get it! I bet he got promoted because he's such a brown-noser!"
Label/Replace/Forward Focus
Wow, I was being overly critical there, and I usually don't criticize.. I'm going to do a great job at next week's presentation and blow his socks off!
3. "My mother-in-law hates me. No matter what I do it's not good enough."
Label/Replace/Forward Focus
Woops – negative attitude. Hey, that woman raised an awesome daughter.
4. "What happened to my life!? These kids are sucking it away and they don't even care!"
Label/Replace/Forward Focus
Hey... What happened to my positive outlook? They're just kids! You know, I should go outside with them to play and get some fresh air.
5. My wife is such a lousy cook!
Label/Replace/Forward Focus
That wasn't kind. I know she does her best. Maybe I should give it a try.

Another way we can direct thoughts in positive ways is to practice ignoring the negative ones.

We all have thousands of thoughts each day. Some are going to be positive and productive, and others will be worrisome, fearful, covetous, etc. *The question isn't whether or not you're going to have negative thoughts – it's what you choose to do with the ones you have.*

You really only have two choices. You can either worry about them, analyze them, think more and more about them, or you can dismiss them; not take the negative thoughts seriously and let them go. Of course, we want to learn how to do the latter, so think on this: When you have a thought – any thought – realize that, that's *all* it is...*just* a thought. It truly can't hurt you without your permission.

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Think of a negative thought as a match that has just been lit. You can either blow it out immediately and stay healthy, or you can let it burn, hurt and scar you. The choice is yours.

Let's look at two examples:

Karen, painfully shy, was completely convinced that her introversion and her low self-esteem were her parents' fault. Karen bitterly explained, "My parents didn't do a very good job, and that's why I'm a social failure."

Karen let the negative thoughts fester and wound her; convincing herself that she should indeed be unhappy. Instead, she should have realized that although her childhood was difficult, *in this present moment, she has a choice* and can direct her thoughts. Another example:

Darrel and Katie had a quarrel just minutes before Darrel left for work. Darrel "blew out the match" and let the negative thoughts go soon after he left the house. Katie, on the other hand, was still stewing and angry about the issue when Darrel came home at 6:00 o'clock that night.

While Darrel was able to have a productive day, Katie didn't get anything accomplished because she spent hours fuming and fretting, calling family and friends to complain and get advice. What she didn't understand is that an argument that happens in the morning is no longer an actual argument; it's a thought in your mind. And we can do with our thoughts whatever we choose.

As you learn to ignore and dismiss negative thoughts – blowing out the flaming match immediately – your ability to do so will increase, and you'll become a more peaceful and loving person.

In addition to the negative/positive **self**-beliefs you're working on, I'd like to suggest you make an effort to eliminate *all* negative expressions, no matter how benign they may seem. Your subconscious mind takes it all in – and anything negative becomes part of who you are. So we should get rid of the "little negatives" that clutter our conversations and weaken us:

- "I don't think I can do that."
- "I'm afraid I'll be late."
- "I'll never get through this – there's so much to do."
- "If I didn't have bad luck I wouldn't have any luck at all!"
- Yep – I knew it! Just when things were starting to go well, this had to happen."

Other negative expressions to watch for (and discard) come in the form of questions. One of the best keys to behavior change is to stop asking yourself bad questions and start asking good

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ones. Let's look at some commonly-asked "Why" questions:

- "Why does this always happen to me?"
- "Why can't I figure it out?"
- "Why can't I ever remember names?"
- "Why am I depressed?"
- "Why don't they like me?"

What are you focusing on when you're asking those questions? Negativity. If you're feeling miserable it's usually because you're deleting all the reasons you could be feeling good. Far better are these "What" and "Who" questions, which help us ignore the negative:

- "What could I do to make myself feel happier?"
- "What is really great in my life right now?"
- "What can I learn from this that will make me a better person?"
- "Who can I help today?"
- "Who loves me? Who are the people I love most in the world?"

I guarantee that if you ask questions like these you'll focus on the positive and feel better. There are two more important questions to ask yourself at this point (reflecting on these may feel like you're looking in the mirror at long-hidden parts of yourself): "If I don't change my negative patterns of thinking and questioning, what will it cost me in the long run?" and "Isn't it about time that I start enjoying the results of developing new, empowering habits of positive self-talk?"

By Improving the Words you Consistently Use You Can Immediately Improve the Quality of Your Thoughts, Your Emotions and Your Life

One of my heroes, Norman Vincent Peale wrote:

To overcome your obstacles and live the 'I Don't Believe in Defeat' philosophy, cultivate a positive-idea pattern deeply in your consciousness. What we do with obstacles is directly determined by our mental attitude. Most of our obstacles, as a matter of fact, are mental in character.

"Ah," you may object, "mine are not mental, mine are real."

Perhaps so, but your attitude toward them is mental. The only possible way you can have an attitude is by the mental process, and what you think about your obstacles largely determines what you do about them. Form the mental attitude that you cannot remove an obstacle and you will not remove it, not if you think you can't. But get the idea firmly fixed that the obstacle is not so great as you

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previously considered it to be. Hold the idea that it is removable, and however faintly you entertain this positive thought, from the very moment you begin to think in this manner, the process is inaugurated which will lead to its ultimate removal.

If you have been long defeated by a difficulty, it is probably because you have told yourself for weeks, months and even for years that there is nothing you can do about it. You have so emphasized your inability to yourself that your mind gradually accepted the conclusion upon which you have insisted, and when your mind is convinced, you are convinced, for as you think so are you.

But, on the contrary, when you develop a new mental slant, emphasizing and reemphasizing a positive attitude, you will convince your own consciousness that you can do something about difficulties. When at last your mind becomes convinced, astonishing results will begin to happen. Of a sudden you discover that you have the power you would never before acknowledge. (*The Power of Positive Thinking*)

Taking action and applying these empowering principles requires a certain confidence on our part . . . confidence in our ability to generate change in our lives.

Confidence

Confidence, in combination with a realistic self-appraisal, produces a 30 percent increase in life satisfaction (Sedlacek, 1999).

Nine in ten people who believe they will one day realize their career goals have strong feelings of competence and assertiveness (Velting, 1999).

To build confidence, the practice of suggesting Confidence Concepts to your mind is highly effective. If your mind is filled with thoughts of insecurity and inadequacy, it is because such ideas have dominated your thinking over a long period of time. The solution? A more positive pattern of ideas must be given to the mind, and that's accomplished by repetitive suggestion of confidence ideas. Thought disciplining is required if you are to re-educate the mind and make it into a positive-power-producing plant. It is possible, even in the midst of your daily work, to drive Confidence Concepts into consciousness.

The conclusion of a study by Myers and Diener (1995): "Across all ages and all groups, a solid belief in one's own abilities increases life satisfaction by about 30%, and makes us happier both in our home lives and in our work lives."

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Confidence Concept Cards

Let me tell you about a previously struggling and now highly-successful salesman who made this idea work for him. This man put 3x5-inch cards everywhere he could easily see them: on his bathroom mirror, on his desk at work, in his car (on the visor), and in his planner. On these cards were Confidence Concepts that affirmed his goodness. Some samples:

“I am a great salesman!”

“I radiate confidence and kindness to everyone.”

“I am a patient, loving husband and father.”

“I am organized and efficient at work and at home.”

“Nothing is impossible, because I am a successful leader in every area of my life.”

Do you see how this type of positive input, read regularly and believed sincerely, can have a powerful impact on your level of confidence? The lesson is to look at life through lenses dipped in optimism and to remember that “As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

Do not forget that if we constantly think of the forces that seem to be against us, we form them into an unrealistic power, and they become stronger. But if, on the contrary, we mentally visualize and affirm our assets, contemplating our strengths and abilities, we can rise out of any difficulty.

Know this: your level of confidence depends upon the thoughts that habitually occupy your mind. Think defeat and you are defeated. Think confidently and you will develop such a strong sense of capacity that, regardless of the obstacles that arise, you'll overcome them.

Before we move on, take a moment and ask yourself two questions: “What do I want people to see when they look at me?” and, “Is what people *now* see a reflection of what I want to be?”

Reminder: You're in Control

What do you see in your 'self mirror'? What you think of yourself determines your success boundaries and sets your limits. By improving your self-image, you expand your boundaries and extend your limits.

Where is your 'self picture' and who creates it? It's in your mind, and you do.

Your brain is a marvelous mechanism that works for your success or for your failure. Since you're the operator, the outcome depends on your skills. Are you in control? Do you direct and carefully maneuver your thoughts so that you focus on your goals - steering straight toward them as you power along life's highway? Or are you out of control, frequently allowing negative and

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destructive thoughts to take the wheel? Know, without a doubt, that you can daily drive your thoughts, words and actions in the direction of high achievement. And *with the right tools and consistent effort, you can steer yourself toward previously unimagined joy and unattainable success.*

On a day-to-day basis, having confidence in your ability to control your thoughts can make a huge difference in your life. An example of this is Paul, age 68, from Orem, Utah, who suffered a debilitating back injury. He said, "I worked on tolerating high levels of pain and felt *confident* I could overcome anything!"

Give Yourself *Healthy* Self-fulfilling Prophecies!

Self-fulfilling prophecies are statements that help you become what you want to be. They are incredibly powerful in their effectiveness relative to self-esteem. You can either damage your feelings of self-worth or build yourself up, depending on how you use self-fulfilling prophecies. The sooner we begin building ourselves up, the faster we'll progress.

Examples of healthy self-fulfilling prophecies:

- "It's just like me to be on time! I'm usually prompt and ready."
- "I like to meet new people, and I'm good at helping them feel comfortable around me."
- "Even if she's rude to me I'll still be kind to her; because I don't let other people determine how I react."
- "I like the way this is turning out. Good thinking!"
- "It's not like me to make mistakes like that. I'll do it better next time."

This principle is illustrated perfectly by the story of a young boy and his father. The father promised his son that if he would practice all day, he'd play baseball with him after work. When Dad arrived home he accompanied the boy to the backyard.

"Show me what you can do," the father said. The little boy shuffled his feet, threw the ball up in the air, took a swing and missed. "Strike one," said the dad.

The son repositioned his feet, threw the ball up again, took a second swing and missed again. His father commented, "Strike two."

More determined than ever, the boy dug in deeper, threw the ball higher and took a third mighty swing. He missed again, spun completely around and fell on the ground. His father said, "Strike three, you're out. Well, what do you think about that?"

The youngster stood up, brushed himself off and cheerfully responded, "Man, am I a good pitcher!"

That's the way we want to think about ourselves!



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**“The happiness of your life depends on the quality of your thoughts.”
Marcus Aurelius Antoninus**

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