

MARRIAGE AND INTIMACY

A Guide to Growing a Happy
Relationship Filled with Love
and Friendship

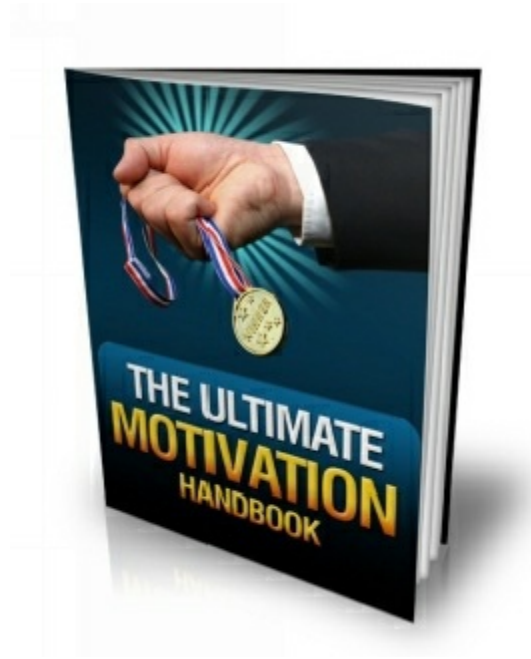


T. WHITMORE

Marriage and Intimacy

***A Guide to Growing a Happy Relationship Filled
with Love and Friendship***

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Introduction

Before You Get Started Reading

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I wish to thank and congratulate you for downloading the book “How to Grow Sexual Intimacy”. This book is meant to serve as a guide for women on how to build and sustain sexual intimacy; a key ingredient to any successful marriage.

You see it is one thing to really love and adore someone yet another to communicate that through action. At any one time, words still remain meaningless without actions. Not to mean however that intimacy is the ultimate expression of love, but it does remain the cutting edge after feelings and those meaningless words settle down.

It is however often easier to blame a failing marriage on finances, career commitments or even parenting, but the unyielding truth is, lack of sexual intimacy is trending a major marriage killer today. Thanks to Holly Wood, romance novels and past sexual experiences, many people approach

marriage with ungrounded perceptions towards sex. Because of this notion, they carry insidious expectations which if they are not met, can spell serious repercussions in any marriage.

Intimacy for starters is not all about what happens in between the sheets; it's rather about everything else that transpires before sex. Sexual intimacy is simply the icing on the cake; it is where the ultimate deal is sealed. In essence, how often you want to make love to your partner or how often they want to make love to you lies on a thin line between romance and sex, sexual intimacy!

In reality, men and women view romance and sex through varied lenses. It is imperative to seek to meet your spouse's both physical and emotional needs. Make romance a priority in your relationship, create an ambient setting for sex in the bedroom, communicate your commitment and love for them. Bottom line; go all the way for them without holding back.

Continue reading and it remains my greatest hope that the content herein is able to help you improve on intimacy, romance and sex in your marriage. Here's to a "Happily ever after" for you.

Chapter 1

Seeing Beyond the imperfections

Marriage is not a romance movie

You must admit that when it comes to a romance movie, everything is just flawless. Like boy meets girl, sweeps her so off her feet, falls crazily in love, gets married and lives happily ever after. I mean what's not to love in that fairy tale?

Tell you the truth, though, romance movies dictate an over-simplified version of how things actually really happens. Here everything sort of works itself out in time and the problems are never real, always easy to solve.

Sadly, we all know that real life events don't work that way. It becomes a real story, about real people, with real problems. Sorry to disappoint you but your life is not about to work out like in that romance movie, it shouldn't! You see there will be heartbreaks and trials, these are inevitable, you will triumph and suffer for love and as for that happily ever after, you can bet it won't come cheap.

The good news is that living in reality is incredibly beautiful and liberating. Trying to live your life as that of romantic series and films can easily set you up for disconnect and discontent having to face the reality that your real life love story and marriage will never measure up.

Not to mean however that it is impossible to meet a prince because it is possible to even marry one for keeps. But remember that he will be human, with faults and weaknesses no matter how exceptional and wonderful he is. So I guess at one point, you've just got to drop the crazy metaphor of fairy tale romance to find true love and happiness.

The Utmost Surrender

As a reality check, a marriage is made by two imperfect people despite the idealized version most of us persist to cling onto. There will be many mistakes made, obstacles created and hearts broken; in fact you should know that it's only about to get overly chaotic, but hey, that's the beauty of it.

That you encounter bumps and wrinkles along the way; this can only ignite your zeal and resilience. Just as the best leaders have been made through the glaring face of adversity and triumph, so is a resilient marriage.

You are therefore going to need to learn to embrace the mistakes you've made and those of your spouse and instead use them as a learning platform. Love accepts immense imperfections; to love is to surrender to imperfect nature and the inevitable, to fully accommodate.

You are going to need to quit trying so much to fix the other person and instead find inexhaustible ways to complement their flaws. You see fixing is always an inside job and given that all of us are like old houses, fixing one thing no doubt gets another broken.

Pursue therefore the wealth of abundance that comes from inspiring, appreciating and loving genuinely. It is about surrendering to your marriage, to your spouse and finding them perfect through all their imperfections. When we say love conquers all, this includes the

imperfections.

Don't compare Situations

While all couples have problems, being able to work through them together fosters a whole new level of intimacy. This further helps you see a fight or disagreement as not something that drives you further apart but rather, as a great opportunity to test deeper waters within your marriage.

It is during conflicts that we get to know a lot more about the other person. So you've made mistakes, instead of agonizing and regretting over spilt milk, why not use them to build deeper intimacy. When you are able to iron out challenges together, scale past them and forge forward, you can only breed deeper intimacy.

Regardless of how much bliss you may seem to notice in someone else's marriage, never, ever make a mistake of comparing your situation with someone else's. Remember everyone is fighting their own fight and comparing your story with that of other people will only breed worse disappointments and frustrations.

All in all, two imperfections may not necessarily make a perfect, but they sure make a solid marriage!

Seize the Moment – Seeing Everyday as a Gift

Being happy isn't about getting what you want all at once, it is loving and appreciating what you have and being grateful for it. In essence, it is up to you to choose what you see when you look at life; do you see the imperfections surrounding it or do you see its many miracles?

Respectively, in marriage, you've got to abandon the mentality that makes you feel responsible for fixing the world and everything else around you. This stereotype kind of thinking makes it hard for you to see the love and goodness with life and especially inhibits possible happiness.

Maybe your marriage hasn't been working out for some time now to the point you are probably beginning to regret why you even married your spouse. Or could it be that you made a bad decision that negatively impacted on your career, still dwelling on that flaw, allowing it to lag you behind?

You need to start practicing purposeful living. You will need to stop beating yourself up for things and situations you have no control over and start breeding positivity. Being positive means seeing every challenge in your marriage as an opportunity and not necessarily a stumbling block.

Know that life is not fair to either of us and you can bet that the day you make the decision to stop living as a victim, that is the day you will start living! If you become too pre-occupied with everything going wrong in your life, then you will end up missing out on the golden chances to seize the many defining opportunities in your marriage.

Bottom line, learn to practice gratitude instead and for every chance you get to make a difference in your spouse's life, seize it because life is indeed too short.

Chapter 2

Conversation- Learning to Ask for what You Want

The Uninhibited Attitude

You see, sometimes we miss to spot the many good things happening in our lives because we are too busy seeking perfection. In fact, many are the times that we overlook those simple little things going on well in our lives because we keep our focus on the big milestones yet to be scaled.

You see when there is lack of satisfaction; you become a complainer. Nothing is ever good enough for you; in fact, you keep pursuing the impossible, perfection. Often times, if you ask someone that keeps complaining in marriage why they do while there is always the option of conversation, the answer is never encouraging. You'll hear statements like "Of course I must complain, I mean he never listens!"

In this regard, you realize that this is instead a person seeking to have their needs met in all the wrong ways. True, complaints often result from frustrations but understanding that the same only keep us further from our end goal greatly helps in making better decisions. Our greatest need is to attract and not repel, it is to build and not destroy, it is to heal and not wound.

In pursuit to initiate cooperation from your spouse, you realize that complaining instead builds immense resistance just the same. Conversation works every time. Consider a scenario where a wife keeps complaining to her husband that he never has time for her and the kids because he's always working long hours.

On the reverse, she is still at liberty to use a completely different approach and instead of complaining, ask for a sitting with her husband to facilitate a positive dialogue. When he's right there in front of you, instead of ranting about all the many ways in which he has failed you, why not advocate for a solution instead?

Say something like, "I think we should do something this weekend, we could maybe go horse riding" or "Sweet heart, you know I've realized we haven't really had time alone together lately, it seems like a really good idea to plan for a vacation".

What You Want in the Bedroom

Let's face it, the thought of asking flat out for what you want in bed can be intimidating especially for a woman. However, whether in a new relationship or married, taking the initiative of spicing things up a little in the bedroom can go a long way.

Funny enough, the reason most women settle for a boring sex life, the reason they don't get to ask for what they really want is because in reality, they just don't know what it is that they really want.

When it comes to sex, it remains a learning process. Each day during your marriage you learn something new about yourself in the bedroom, about your body's reactions to be specific. There is therefore the dire need to be attentive about what works for you and what just doesn't.

Remember that there is nothing wrong with not knowing what you want in bed, think of it rather as awakening and keep an open mind to learn. Ahead of you lies an exciting journey with tons of mind blowing discoveries, so you better put your seat belt on and enjoy the ride.

The first thing you will need to do is to change the attitude you have towards sex. Maybe you've been lying there every night, every time you have sex with your husband having already resolved yourself to the idea of 'impossible' when it comes to sexual excitement and satisfaction, but it shouldn't be so.

It's a Give-Take Scenario

You haven't been able to enjoy sex for the longest time but because it's a matrimonial right you owe your husband, you just lie there and let him have his way. Now this is wrong attitude! When it comes to sex in marriage, it is an obligation of each one of you bound in marriage to oversee to each other's sexual gratification.

What am I trying to retaliate? That your husband is responsible for your maximum pleasure and due orgasm in bed and that you owe him nothing that he cannot give back! In marriage, everything is give-take. There is no way to demand respect from your partner if you yourself don't reciprocate the same. Just like respect is earned, so is intimacy.

You've got to meet each other half way the avenue to sexual pleasure and whether it means making

sacrifices for the other's happiness, so be it. As a wife, reasoning that you alone owe your husband sexual gratification is insidiously absurd and disturbing.

When it comes to intimacy and sex, each partner has their role to play. Given that women require a lot of time and patience to reach maximum stimulation, a husband should be willing to sacrifice his sexual gratification and wait upon his wife.

In essence, a caring husband will be on the lookout for his wife's sexual satisfaction. It is impossible not to notice a sequence where his wife has just been giving herself away to him.

A caring husband will be concerned if his wife is unable to achieve an orgasm on repeated occasions, a caring husband will strive to ensure that his wife enjoys their intimate moments just as much as he does.

Facing Your Utmost Desires and Worries

When you read relationships and marriage content, they keep retaliating on how you could be having better conversations, better sex, better orgasms and an overall better marriage. However, while this might sound easy, how well a marriage thrives in terms of intimacy is greatly determined by how well you understand your deepest desires.

An uninhibited attitude when it comes to asking for what you want in bed comes from scaling beyond the embarrassment when asking for it because you understand that it is perfectly okay to ask. One of the reasons most women are not open to the idea of asking for certain things in the bedroom is because they are worried of hurting their partner's feelings.

Sure, there are many men suffering from premature ejaculation and erectile dysfunction. What you don't know however is that, in often times when it comes to most sexual problems with men, you neither have to look as far to find the culprit because she is standing right there in front of you, it is you!

As a woman, you have power to either break or build a man and this goes without saying that most sexual dysfunctions and challenges men go through are as a result of having to tolerate unappreciating, nagging, negative and accusing women.

Know therefore that there is always a better way of expressing your dissatisfaction when your man cannot hold up an erection. When you beat your man up in regard to their sexual performance, the anxiety you help build up has power to breed premature ejaculation among other sexual dysfunctions.

Instead of driving him to the edge with your mighty expectations, why not meet him half way the journey. Help him work on maintaining an erection longer instead of complaining that he just can't.

By the end of the day, for sex to be enjoyable in marriage, each partner has to be willing to pursue to the end what works for the other because yes, your sexual satisfaction remains highly dependent on

Chapter 3

Making your Bedroom a Safe Haven

Re-defining Your Bedroom

When it comes to your bedroom as a married couple, it should be everything but a hassle. Let's face it; given that life is already full of enough hassles and bustles, it is definite that you will have had enough of these throughout the day. When it's finally time to go home and relax, time to be with your family and especially time to be with your spouse, it remains a desperate call for action to redefine your bedroom.

First there needs to be an absolute de-clutter episode. It doesn't matter how much attachment you hold to all the clutter there possibly is in your bedroom but it no doubt needs to go.

For heaven's sake the sight of a pile of papers you need to work on tomorrow at work isn't a mood builder and neither is your pet hijacking the rear end of your bed. Adorable okay, you love him, even better but he or she just like your kids must know their dwellings.

Bottom line; make it imperative to leave your bedroom as bare and spacious as possible. With space, a neat and ambient surrounding, the thought of experimenting and discovering better sex positions is encouraged.

There is no way you will fancy experimenting on the floor with a pile of books lying all over neither is it going to be adventurous to try out the couch if it's where your pet decided to make herself comfortable. So de-clutter and change some rules around.

It always takes two

It's easy to dismiss the idea of comfort when it comes to your bedroom. True your bedroom isn't a comfort hotel but you should really be able to do everything possible to make it as comfortable for romance to thrive.

A marriage takes two people and so does intimacy and sex. So when it comes to the bedroom setting, make sure that there is two of everything. In this regard, two pillows, two towels, two water glasses, two candle sticks, etc. All in all, bear in mind that intimacy thrives best where the ambience invites sharing.

Remember intimacy itself takes two people coming together to share their love to the deepest levels. The last thing you need therefore is to make the mistake of sleeping in separate bedrooms. Bonding can only come from sharing the same room, the same bed, breathing the same air; and in essence, co-existing within the same 'limited' space.

Sexing-up Your Bedroom

Wait a minute, how sexy is your bedroom? Does it invite unmonitored action or does it work incredibly hard to spoil possible sexual mood? True, the bedroom has long been primarily associated with sleep but when it comes to marriage, that notion needs to be scrapped off and replaced with something more enticing.

There are no doubt better places to check your emails, watch trending news and handle your family businesses. You don't have to allow some of these romance killers to destroy the mood because remember by the end of the day, this is where the magic of love happens. Behind closed doors, this is where love and intimacy can be best brewed. So dare place a "do not disturb tag" on the door if you feel that it is peace and quiet that you need.

You see, when the mood is just right for sex and your thoughts are in sync with the mood, there is no telling the depths you can go with intimacy. This therefore cannot be the time you get to think of your intolerable boss or the laundry still at the dry cleaners, credit card issues or your kids. Intimacy time means scraping off any thought that doesn't belong in your bedroom.

Life is not perfect, neither is it without problems so even at such moments when you are feeling really stressed, try and let go every thought for the moment not meant for intimacy and bonding. The only thing you can achieve with negative thoughts during intimacy is to "successfully spoil your intended special moment". In essence, the better the mood, no doubt the better the sex too!

Those Nitty-Gritty Details

Throughout time, studies have shown that electronics in the bedroom are a mood killer. Truth be told, couples that have a TV in their bedroom have sex half as often compared to those who don't. Surely there are better stimulating sights for a man than that of a woman watching the Kardashians series and if you ask me, it might as well be time that you got rid of that T.V in your bedroom.

Again, intimacy with the presence of a sweet, inviting aroma eclipsing the air around is bound to blossom. There are inexhaustible ways to invite passionate love making using the sense of smell. For instance, rumors have it that vanilla and cinnamon scent flavors have drive to transit a man into just the right mood for love making. Flowers are also a complementary in the bedroom, fresh flowers especially and not just for their sweet aroma but for the ambient attribute too.

Music also plays a great role in sex and no doubt there are inexhaustible songs that have power to place you and your husband in just the right mood for sex. While some couples prefer rock and roll, others will choose rather to have the classical sounds playing in the background as they make merry.

You therefore are at liberty to go for what works for the two of you. Just in case you are in doubts, anything with romantic lyrics rarely disappoints. How you are dressed also plays a significant role when it comes to love making. The type of lingerie you wear greatly impacts on the sense of touch and sight. There is no doubt that getting dressed in a sexy outfit turns your spouse on, but don't just go for sexy, go for comfortable too.

You know best what complements your skin and appearance best from color to texture whether it is

silk, soft or lacy garments. In essence, whatever that is which provokes stimulation and arousal upon touch from the very moment he touches you to the moment he undresses you, it no doubt does the trick.

Chapter 4

Placing your Partner's needs before Your Own

Selflessness at Work

It has been said time and time again that women are needy creatures; in fact every man gets to acquaint himself with this fact before he even asks a woman out on a date. That emotionally, she's going to need a lot of his attention, a lot of his pampering and a lot of his understanding. In essence, women are said to need treatment like that of a tray of eggs but does it really has to be so?

You see, because of too much neediness, it is easy to find yourself becoming too needy to the point of selfishness. Yes, it is as easy to become too emotionally needy that even though you are not desperate, you end up over magnifying your needs and expectations.

With time, you start looking for perfection in your spouse, expecting them to meet each one of your every need. Given that no one person on earth can uphold perfection, this often ends up brewing problems within your marriage and in this case, happiness can only fade further.

How much would it cost you to defy norm and instead of being the emotionally needy, choose to become emotionally self reliant? To be emotionally self-reliant means not expecting your husband to be responsible for your happiness, because you already have enough self-validation.

To be emotionally self-reliant further means that you are not the jealous type because you've mastered and embraced the immense value of trust. It means you have other things going on in your life besides your marriage such as fostered relationships with friends, colleagues and children.

There is a certain liberation that comes from being a master of your own happiness, having the courage to rock emotional independence not to mention how impeccably the same complements on relationships in general.

Emotional self-reliance opens you up to world of possibility where you are no longer the center of attention but rather the master of attention. You are ultimately able to tap on other people's needs instead of focusing too much on your own.

The Taste of True Love

In life, what affects us most, what has power to mold us into the people we want to be is found in other people. This means the people we meet including strangers, the ones we interact with throughout life; these are the ones who have a profound effect on us overall.

It is from these interactions that defining decisions are made including that of marriage. In the early years of courtship, when you and your spouse first fell in love, there was this deep connection you couldn't overlook anymore prompting you to make the defining decision of marriage.

The definition of true love, loving someone is vowing to accord them care, probably a lot more than the one you give yourself. It is to want their happiness at any cost, to want them to keep smiling and that they could live in absolute peace. It means focusing on his value and not his weaknesses, it means seeing beyond his imperfect nature and finding immense ways to complement him imperfect nature.

In essence, it is only when you are able to place someone else's needs, happiness and overall well being above your own that you tap into the zenith with loving them, now that becomes the ultimate definition of true love.

The moment you are able to place your spouse's happiness before your own, then that is the time you are able to limitless love them. Remember that while anyone can claim to love, it is the actions behind the words that define the worth of their acclaimed love. Make therefore the vow to limitlessly love by taking the initiative to limitlessly positively affect your spouse. Sex in itself doesn't define love, it rather complements it but selflessness does the definition justice no doubt.

Scaling beyond misconceived Perceptions

So you want your husband to treat you like a princess, then you've also got to meet him half way and treat him like a king. It is easy to reason that your decision to place your husband's needs above your own makes you a wimp but how wrong you are!

Just because you choose to prioritize his needs doesn't make you inferior to him neither does it make it about him, the only thing this manages to achieve is to greatly reaffirm the supremacy of your marriage.

The trait if humility is crucial in marriage. So you are both tired, it's been a long day for the both of you but who gets up to check on the baby or to check whether the door is locked. Will you wholeheartedly be the one to wake up without expecting that your husband and you should share equal rights?

These may seem like small insignificant things but when it all boils down; they are not tiny at all. You'd be surprised at just how much

some of these acts of humility pay up when it comes to blossoming relationships.

Forging Character and Strength

Again the ability to let go is vital because you see, most of the many fights people put up in marriage are overly irrelevant and unimportant. So he forget to flush water after using the toilet, forget about that. He left his clothes lying on the floor in the morning or forgot to act on the message you left on his voicemail, let it go!

Life is all about choices so choose to focus more on his strong points instead of his weaknesses. That grave misconception that you become a wimp every time you are not asserting your needs and rights is no doubt a relationship killer.

Know that it takes character and real strength to step back and allow the needs of the other person to surface. To be able to take pleasure in giving and not to feel threatened by the same defines someone who has defied all odds to be able to limitlessly live. It further also defines someone with clear recognition of purpose and priority.

In essence, that you are able to treat your husband as a king means you are already adorned in royalty and are defending all honors that come with being the wife of a king.

Chapter 5

Defeating Sexual Dysfunction in Women

Understanding a Woman's sexuality

First and foremost it is important to note that women's sexuality vary greatly from one woman to the other. While one woman can enjoy a satisfying sex life all through her life, for another, their sexual responsiveness peak is greatly heightened during their late thirties or their early forties.

With so many factors affecting a woman's experiences including life circumstances, hormonal levels, personal preferences, age and overall health, every day becomes a strive for a woman to maximize on sexual satisfaction.

Again a woman's sexuality is always an intricate relationship between emotional and physical response all affecting the way she thinks or feels about herself. When a woman happens to experience problems with her sexuality which we would hereby refer to as sexual dysfunction, it is not just her personal relationships that are affected but her self-esteem too.

Women suffer in silence

Still at this day and age where you would think that women and health care givers have gotten

liberated when it comes to sexuality, many are still hesitant to exhaust the odds with sexual dysfunction. This is one of the reasons why most women continue to suffer needlessly in silence while their issues have possible treatment and solutions.

When we talk of sexual indulgence, we consider a host of intimate activities like self-stimulation, fondling and intercourse. Women vary great in regard to sexual interest, expression and response and this therefore means that it becomes as easy for a woman's feelings to change in respect to circumstances, personal preferences and age.

In the same light, women get to experience various sexual problems like lack of sexual desire, delayed sexual desire, vaginal dryness, painful sex and lack of orgasm. Not to worry though because most of the existent sexual problems today can easily be treated with the inexhaustible sexual health experts there are today.

Sexual Dysfunction Related Problems

Sexual dysfunction therefore refers to problems at any one sexual response cycle phase that inhibits you as an individual or as a couple from experiencing satisfactory sexual enjoyment. There are a variety of sexual problems a woman can suffer from in regard to sexual dysfunction including the inhibited sexual desire, lack of orgasm, arousal inability or painful penetration.

Sometimes sexual dysfunction issues can be a lifelong experience or it could also begin at some point due to external factors and circumstances. While most couples choose to remain mum about the

presence sexual challenges, sexual dysfunction related problems remains the most defining problems couples face today.

The inhibited sexual desire is no doubt a major challenge for most couples. It is a sexual condition in women characterized by low sexual desire and interest. When you suffer from this condition as a woman, you find that you rarely want to willingly engage in sexual activities if ever you do and any one of your partner's efforts to stimulate you goes down the drain.

The inability to orgasm is another culprit affecting healthy sex in many marriages. This is where a woman experiences delayed sexual climax and while it can be caused by sexual inexperience or inhibition sometimes it is as a result of psychological factors such as anxiety, guilt or past sexual trauma like rape.

Again there are also those women who rarely ever experience arousal during sex often because of vaginal dryness, anxiety or inadequate stimulation from their partner. Again this retaliates more the great need there is to be able to boldly ask for what you want in bed and to communicate your preferences and needs.

Even after sufficient stimulation through foreplay and unmonitored romance, there are women who still experience pain when it's finally time for vaginal penetration. While most women who suffer from painful intercourse have poor lubrication to blame, there are a number of other possible culprits responsible including vaginitis, ovarian cysts or STI's.

Treating Sexual Dysfunction Problems

It would be quite unfortunate if this chapter has revealed a possible culprit affecting your sex life in marriage. Whether your challenge is with inadequate stimulation, delayed desire and orgasm or painful intercourse, the best thing to note is that you now have knowledge. Know that the first step to overcoming any obstacle is identifying it after which you acknowledge and address it.

A visit to your doctor will be worth every effort where the doctor will conduct a physical exam and a thorough evaluation of your registered symptoms. A further test may be conducted in regard to your reproductive organs or a Pap test to check for cancerous condition.

In essence, you can be assured that the culprit will be detected and respective treatment accorded. Sometimes our sexual dysfunction may be easily related to negative perception towards sex or other psychological where respective treatment and advisory will be accorded.

Treatment for sexual dysfunction will involve due coordination between the patient and health care professional or therapist. While most psychological related sexual dysfunction issues can be changed as easily as through treating the underlying problems, other strategies embraced includes:-

- **Informative learning-** Sometimes a doctor will have to take you through the human anatomy system, sexual functioning and inevitable changes to be expected with age. This

enlightenment is able to help you overcome possible anxieties about your sexual performance and function.

- **Better Stimulation**-If the issue affecting your sexual performance is stimulation related, then a healthcare professional or therapist may advocate you incorporate erotic materials into your sex life including books and videos that provokes sexual stimulations.
- **Experimenting with sex positions**- If your issue when it comes to sexual indulgence comes from pain during intercourse, then a health care professional may advice you as the woman to try other sex positions where can absolutely control the penetration depth and where you also control the likelihood that the intercourse can stop in case the pain becomes too much. Vaginal lubricants and a warm bath prior to sex also helps reduce the pain experienced from friction during intercourse.

Chapter 6

Dealing with Hurt –Forgiveness, Always a Virtue

Do we really Understand Forgiveness?

In this world we live in, one ruled and defined by the imperfection with nature, a husband and wife bound in marriage are bound to hurt each other at one point or the other. This happens because we are not perfect and while there is always the option to forgive and bask in utmost liberation, when you instead choose to hold on to hurt, bitterness will no doubt envelop your marriage.

In marriage, the things that need forgiveness on a daily basis are inexhaustible. Maybe he forgot to pick up the kids from school, he forgot to flush water after using the toilet or maybe he left his clothes lying all over the floor while getting ready for work in the morning. Sometimes, these wrongs will keep recurring and it's not because your partner doesn't care about your feelings because he does, but rather because of the inevitable with life's imperfection.

It therefore dawns on us just how imperative it is to understand the virtue of forgiveness. Know that forgiving your spouse isn't letting them off the hook; it does not mean that you become the victim or that you encourage the hurt to recur again, forgiveness means pardoning the other person's hurt even if they don't repent. It is about your attitude and not the other person's actions.

While forgiveness liberates you of unnecessary burdens of hurt today, there is also no guarantee that the same memories won't be triggered again in future. The most important thing therefore is to be

conscious about what we do with the memories in the event they are triggered back later on in life.

The best resolution would be for you to choose to see them rather as a timely reminder of the value of forgiveness and use these same memories to evaluate just how much you have grown with forgiveness.

Forgiveness and Intimacy

Practicing intimacy in marriage is the closest you can come to knowing your spouse inside out. To deepen and foster intimacy, you will also need to increase your vulnerability and openness with your spouse. This means you will experience the zenith of sharing and transparency in your marriage but while there is always the other side of the coin, you will neither escape the brutality of life.

There will be those times you find yourself being the offender and there will be other times you will be the one offended. Whether unintended or intentional, we all have potential to cause harm, to wound or to hurt the other person. So that means you will at one point need forgiveness just as much as you'll need to forgive.

A hardened heart not only causes lots of pain and suffering but the same also inhibits on sexual indulgence and fulfillment in marriage. Intimacy being the closest connection a couple can enjoy, forgiveness helps open the flood gates of intimacy. It is important therefore to set aside your marriage time where you get the chance to hear each other out. In this regard you can reminisce in some precious memories, maybe go through your wedding photos, how you met and some striking memories shared together.

Allowing room to converse and bond gives room for sharing where each one of you gets the chance to express their hurt or acknowledge the hurt they caused the other. Having created a loving context earlier, it becomes easier to discuss and apologize and forgive.

Given that we are all work in progress, it is only after we get to know better that we can do better. Remember it is vital that you be sincere with the remorse you express in regard to the hurt you caused and that you must learn to apologize and seek forgiveness for selfless reasons.

Ask for forgiveness not because it is more convenient to be in good terms with your spouse but instead because you want the best for them and that you are willing to be the best for them. A wife should be to a husband their safe haven, where he escapes to with assurance of genuine love, care and affection.

Forgive....Say the words

Sometimes the reason you are hurting and in turmoil could be quite adverse and because of the weight of the hurt your spouse may have caused, you may end up feeling as if they are unworthy of your forgiveness. However, the beauty with true forgiveness is that it goes a long way to restoring the trust we once lost and also soothing the wounds caused.

The ability to forgive your spouse is more like freeing them from bondage, from the prison you've

kept them in every time you chose anger over empathy but aside from that, the most liberating part of forgiveness is freeing yourself from the bondage you've built out of resentment, anger, bitterness and more.

No doubt, sincerity and a show of genuine remorse while asking for forgiveness from the other person remains vital. When asking for forgiveness from your spouse, make sure to express your remorse for what you did wrong.

Say something like, "Please forgive me for how insensitive I was with you when you forgot to pick up the kids from school" and when it's instead him asking for forgiveness for how he hurt you, make him feel the magnitude and genuineness of your forgiveness. Reaffirm with a statement like "I forgive you for shouting at me last night when I demanded to know why you forgot to pick up the kids".

There is a certain peace and assurance that comes from forgiveness that meant from the bottom of the heart; it is peace beyond anything describable, it is freedom! So every time you find yourself as the offender seeking forgiveness, first make sure to acknowledge your offense, admit that it was hurtful, and try to relate with the pain you caused. Take ownership by apologizing and asking to be forgiven and most especially, forgive yourself.

In essence life is too short to be anything but happy and on the other hand, marriage is too sweet to allow yourself to live in bounds and limitations of the past. Given the chance to choose, even that sick cancer patient on his dying bed would still choose to live a little longer. So live like there is no tomorrow, show love that knows no limits and such passion that no water can quench!

Conclusion

Thank you so much for downloading this book.

It is my sincere wish that the content herein has managed to help shed some light in regard to marriage, intimacy and sex.

I hope through the tips and in-depth information provided in this book, you will be on your way to upholding a happy marriage and a fulfilling sex life.

Finally, if you enjoyed this book, then I would like to ask you for a favor. Would you be kind enough to leave a review for this book on Amazon? It would be greatly appreciated!

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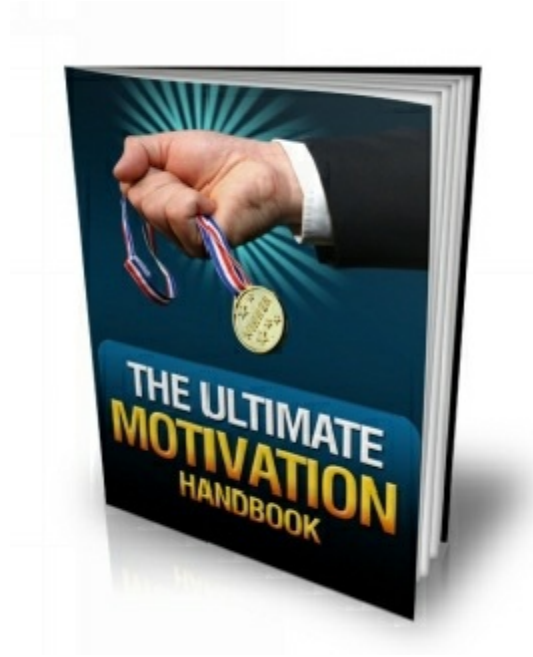
Marriage and Romance

Creative Ways to Keep the Love Alive When Life Gets in the Way

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Introduction

This book is meant to serve as a guide to married couples on how to keep that glow going in their marriage.

Think of courtship and how many times you can go on wishing there was a way to rewind the first date, the first kiss, that day you walked down the aisle or that very day you heard those words ‘I love you’ from your spouse. Most people get into marriage completely blind to the fact that it’s a forever commitment. This means they have this inexhaustible list of expectations, high expectations.

However, in these expectations, there is not a single instance where they anticipate any difficulties, hitches or misunderstandings along the way. In short, most people get into a marriage expecting it to be a bed of roses but it’s not always so. From the very onset of kids, relatives (in-laws especially) and demanding work conditions, trying to balance the cycle can get daunting to the point it holds power to threaten your marriage.

If you are not careful, everything happens so fast that by the time you realize you’ve drifted apart, very little can be done to save your marriage. However, given that worries and stress easily threatens relationships, keeping love and romance alive will work incredibly towards strengthening the marriage bond.

Just like the first day you met, just like your first date, just like your first kiss, just like the first day you made love, believe that it’s quite possible to have that forever. Continue reading for a deeper insight on marriage and how to keep the fire burning.

Chapter 1

Continuing the Courtship

The unmonitored vibrations

Most people don't find the need to continue dating after marriage, in fact, they end up feeling like they already have it all. Again, it is true that after marriage it becomes more difficult to schedule dates with the onset of other commitments especially kids, but like they say, willingness creates a way in the desert.

I guess all you need to know to make a sound decision is that when your marriage foundation starts crumbling down, every other tower built on it will definitely come down. So you realize the great need there is to nurture your marriage.

Long ago when still single, dating evoked unsuppressed vibrations. It was that time to talk, have fun, laugh, get away and just be the two of you. You are trying to know each other so you'd share your dreams, future plans and in essence, took quality time to know each other. Well, as surprising as it may come off, it is after marriage that dating makes even more sense.

Get that Ball Rolling

Probably you are only 3 years in your marriage and already it feels like union has become boring or flat along the way. Well did you know that it is at 3 years that most couples start contemplating divorce?

While you can easily beat the divorce possibility and reclaim back your love, it is neither about to happen overnight. It needs to be as a result of a million approaches to your relationship everyday towards the ultimate prize, ‘a happily ever after’.

Appropriate for Date Nights

Making date night plans shouldn't simply happen because it's valentines, no. Most men tend to have this misconception that their wives automatically shift attention from them the moments kids come into the equation. The worst thing however that they tend to do is use this aspect as an excuse for sneaking around on their spouse.

Appropriating for date nights however has power to erase this mindset because instead of sneaking around on her, you get to sneak around with her. Date nights helps revamp intimacy while at the same time creates uninterrupted time with your spouse for reminisce and bonding.

This is where you set a date and heed to it, switch off your phones and simply let yourself go. This could be a movie, a candle-lit dinner or simply a weekend getaway.

Why continue dating after marriage?

It is really important that couples continue dating; it not only works like a re-invention of their youth

but it also helps bring a fresh approach to the relationship. Nothing beats the power of being able to express your love and appreciation for your spouse despite inevitable challenges and other commitments.

Here are five reasons to continue dating your spouse:-

1. **Familiarity is inevitable with marriage-** Marriage is bound to breed familiarity and because of this, the mystery might just die and you finally realize that you stopped pursuing more about your spouse. While dreams and hopes may change along the way, continued dating helps share these with your partner during that special time alone.
2. **Provokes a certain longing-** There is this excitement that comes with looking forward to a date with your spouse mainly because it is just you two. This also re-ignites the fun and excitement that comes with dating someone, makes you feel young again.
3. **You breed happy children-** The best gift you can give your children is bringing them up in a happy family. Kids can completely drain you and dating after marriage helps deal with the kids but without forgetting your spouse.
4. **Creates time for romance-** Given that women like to be romanced all their lives, dating after marriage helps create time for romantic occasions.

Flowers and gifts shouldn't cease to surface simply because she said 'YES'.

5. **Beats the "Room-mate syndrome"** – For most divorced couples, their separation was as a result of long years of dealing with the 'roommate syndrome' before they had to accept the fact that the spark was no more! Sometimes this happens as a result of demanding life schedules, trying to balance between parenting and work. Continued dating however comes in as a breath of fresh air to help keep the romance alive.

Chapter 2

Complimenting your Spouse

The impacting effect

Has someone ever given a complement that felt like it could last you the rest of your life? Imagine the thrill if just like that, out of the blues, a genuine complementary come landing on you. We are talking about real, genuine complements and not the usual flattery. A simple complement in a relationship works incredibly, more like oil in an engine where you find that it has power to get everything running smoothly.

If you are keen with observation, you will realize that couples who take time to pay genuine complements to their spouse also tend to treat one another with respect and courtesy a blend that helps keep a marriage alive.

As a million dollar rule, make sure you find time to sincerely complement your spouse daily, there must be something nice to say, something you haven't mentioned before. You'd be surprised to find out that it is those small little things left unspoken that provoke insecurity and low-self-esteem, a combination that has power to completely ruin a marriage.

It is therefore important to develop the disciplined habit of recognizing and appreciating the good when we see it. In marriage, couples may find that being too pre-occupied with themselves or the external surroundings make them forget to commend or appreciate the good things happening around them.

Compliment Vs Flattery

When you lack sincerity and honesty with your compliments, they turn into flattery which can be interpreted as insincere faith. Flattery is often viewed with lots of negativity because it comes off as a manipulative tool while on the other hand, a compliment is intended to encourage.

In most cases you will find that you have no control over what your spouse will say to you and in so many instances, it will be hard to tell how genuine their words are. However, in no way should you let yourself fall prey to cynicism or retain a suspicious mindset regarding your spouse's motive when giving a complement. If you make yourself an ambassador of genuine complements, you also become a beneficiary of the same.

Women and Complements

After marriage, women get to suffer unpredictable insecurity issues especially having to deal with their post- baby belly. While they won't say it out loud, they keep wondering whether their spouse still find them attractive.

It is at such junctures that a woman needs to be constantly complemented not because she is self-absorbed, self-centered or is looking for validation, but because the transition to mother-hood never comes with a manual for reference, and it can sure get overwhelming!

Amidst all the hassles with parenting, work and playing her role as a wife, she forgets herself, her needs and it comes as in deed timely for someone to step in, appreciate all her relentless efforts and make her feel beautiful.

She goes on with her daily chores hoping her husband still finds her attractive; believe me that when she is actually able to hear those words from him, it works like magic!

Just say something nice to her, compliment her! No one said it's going to be that simple but let your compliment represent how you feel about her. More like when you compliment her dress, let her feel it's not the dress in essence, but rather how her body looks in it.

However, don't overdo your compliments because the beauty of it isn't to get her overly embarrassed, but rather to mesmerize and make her feel appreciated. Again you don't want to get her immune to those compliments, you want your compliments to have power to lighten her burdens and brighten her days.

Men and Complements

Just because we've gotten accustomed to women being the ones to need complementing every now and then, this shouldn't mean that we neglect complementing men.

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Men also do need reassurance and again it's not because they are insecure, but because a complement just like when issued to a woman helps evoke unimaginable confidence and offers a steaming effect.

Let's face it; he keeps hitting the gyms every chance just so he gets to stay in good shape despite the commitments and challenges life brings forth. He also wears that mouth-watering cologne just so it is in his arms you'll want to seek refuge. Listens to you vent out your frustrations just so you know he is there unconditionally. He goes up to the end of the world just so you never have to lack for anything. A compliment every now and then to show you are proud of him, that you recognize his efforts, that you are moved by his thoughtful nature, that you appreciate that quality time spent with him; all these goes a long way to help recharge his man-ego, for it does need to be fed, often.

Do you know that most men who perform poorly during intimacy are often haunted by mean, hard to

please and self-centered women who just won't acknowledge their efforts? How will he know he's good in bed if you don't tell him? How will he know what he arouses in you if you don't let it show? How will he know he's more than a man enough for you, if you can't make him feel he is?

Benefits of complementing your spouse

Can a complement really improve a marriage or relationship? Well, compliments go a long way to building not just your spouse's character but their overall outlook too. It is important to learn to always prioritize on the good in people and not just seeing their faults.

Remember words can break or build and it's upon you to choose how to use them. Do you think that a woman who gets constant appreciation and undying compliments from her husband will waste her time on the mirror wishing she were someone else, to be able to please her husband?

In essence, lack of appreciation and affection leaves your spouse with low self-esteem and you can bet this greatly affects a marriage.

Here's what you accomplish when you choose to keep those complements coming:-

- You help increase your spouse's self-confidence.
- You manage to strengthen the friendship you two share
- They are motivated to perform better during intimacy
- You help boost your self-worth too
- You set a romantic mood, a complement works like a gentle flirt.

Chapter 3

Find Ways to Have Fun and be Playful

You hear this quote quite often that ‘the couple that prays together, stays together’. Well, while that context is meant in the spiritual aspect, it is also no brainer that when it comes to play, a couple that plays together stays together too. Play is important and during those most difficult times, the bonding developed through play and having fun together can easily carry your marriage through any obstacle.

In essence, try and remember how you’d engage in playful games and fun during courtship, efforts that would often lead to love making or one of the most memorable romantic escapades you’ve ever shared. Having fun and playing with your spouse encourages a physical interaction.

It is an irrefutable fact that there is no better sex than one promoted by playful or fun activities. Playing shouldn’t have to stop just because you’ve become parents with kids whom you think should be the ones playing and not you. Theoretically, play is termed as the gateway to vitality with power to refresh adult-adult relationships.

How to play with your spouse

So do you feel like your marriage could benefit from a little bliss of fun? First of all, you need to

erase the mindset that there are things much more important you could be doing with your time instead of indulging in play.

Taking quality time to enjoy each other helps beat relationship boredom and this means try something new every time.

Here are a variety of things you can do to spice things up:-

1. Enroll for a dance class together. Just for the record, salsa has power to provoke not just sexual attraction but fosters an emotional bonding too.
2. Try new recipes together. This means cook and share a meal from a new recipe, it cannot get better than this!
3. Horseback riding, fishing or bowling; it's not easy to convince your wife to do such outdoor activities, but you know her better and you can persist best!
4. Take a walk together; that's a combination of bonding and fitness.
5. Indulge in a water fight in the kitchen or launch a water war using water guns; always works!
6. Pillow fights will always remain priceless; ambush him or her on their way to the shower and start a pillow fight. Needless to say, you'll end up taking that shower together and making crazy love too!
7. Taking a bubble bath together. With just the correct ambience and setting following candles, wine and flowers, you don't need to go out of the house to have some fun.

Sex Play and fun

The first few years of marriage can still be termed as fun but as time elapses, you realize that it's inevitable for your sex-life to collect some repelling dust. To help bring back the sizzle in the bedroom, it is important to incorporate fun and play during sex.

Yes, there is still possibility to make your sex in marriage feel like a one-night-stand. While marriage is often a way out to suppressing insatiable demands of dating romance, just because sex eventually becomes norm and is available 24/7 doesn't mean you make it some sort of obligation.

When sex becomes more of a chore than a pleasurable experience between two people that love each other, then a lot gets lost too. With time you realize that you put less importance to sex during marriage that you give it last place within your priorities. So find it quite okay to let your preferences known and also pursue to know your partner's preferences and likes in the bedroom.

The idea is to enjoy every slipping second you spend with your partner, change positions when you feel the need to, explore those marked territory. Don't rush too fast that you forget the power of foreplay, it remains the only way to get "THERE". In short, do not let there be limitations when it comes to pleasing your partner.

Benefits of Play and fun activities for couples

So why make time for play? Why take time to share jokes, truth and dare, pick up pillow fights or just turn your bedroom into a hot bed of playful romance?

- **Play brings joy-** It is inevitable that problems will arise during your marriage and especially such with the magnitude to cause disruptions and misunderstandings. Play helps act as a neutralizer or problem solving accelerator in relationships.
- **Play cultivates healing-** Play has the power to help arouse healing especially from hurt. Engaging your partner in play regardless of whether it is a tense moment, helps diffuse the cloud and when it settles, peace finds way.

- **Play fosters socialization** – The most important ingredient in any relationship is cooperation. To reason and make decisions as one is vital and it becomes an added advantage if social skills are well harnessed. Play therefore comes in as a powerful ingredient for positive socialization.

Chapter 4

Spice Things up in the Bedroom-Reinvent Your Romance

Where is the romance?

Have you ever looked back on your life and ended up wondering what happened to the good old days? You know times when you couldn't wait to get home to make merry, times when you'd shiver at the thought of your spouse? Times when there was no better place to fall asleep than in their arms?

Probably the mindset that passion only happens earlier on in a relationship but eventually dies also has a role to play with today's reality with most marriages. Co-existence eventually becomes norm and instead of insatiable feelings, dead feelings surface.

While it is not easy to rekindle the fire especially without ultimate devotion and unsurpassed energy, it would be in your best interest if you worked towards not losing the gist in the first place. So how do you keep the fire burning despite the busy work schedules, parenting and too much familiarity with each other?

Keeping the Fire Burning

First of all it is important to understand that there is nothing like a perfect marriage or perfect relationship. However, that shouldn't help interpret the notion that there is no 'happily ever after' because that notion only lives in your mind. Needless to say that the most defining aspect that helps to keep the fire burning in marriage is intimacy.

The zenith with intimacy is often experienced at the beginning of a relationship or marriage where both physical and emotional intimacy is deeply felt. However, let it be known that with the right approach towards a happy marriage, intimacy can last for as long as ‘forever’.

Understanding the great need there is to keep intimacy alive in a relationship helps counter marital issues and threats brought upon by a poor sex life such as infidelity.

Having to observe young love birds showcase their lovey dovey moments, it is only logical for couples to doubt how alive their romance still is.

So how can you keep the intimacy fire burning even after years of marriage and still keep that spark that is hard to by going?

Communication

How well you sexually relate highly depends on how often you communicate. In marriage, the essence is regarding your partner as your best friend, your best refuge. This way you are able to share with them on just about anything and you’ll be surprised to know how much you are yet to discover about your partner, a lot more.

Communication also helps make your spouse feel the care, involvement and concern you have towards them and this can only bring you closer together.

However, you must bear in mind that communication is a two-way street, and you will need to keep an open mind to listen, as it is the most important aspect during a conversation.

Affection should not be a luxury

You know those small little details that we overlook; they tend to highly impact on relationships. Say you make it imperative to express affection for your spouse where it’s due like a morning or

goodnight kiss.

Calling them that pet name you've invented or just allowing for an occasional flirt. This communicates that love is still in the air. That the attraction is still there.

Respect

Nothing beats the power of holding another person with utmost esteem. Most misunderstandings and fights between couples have a common culprit, lack of respect. This is because respect is a two-way-street and a virtue that can only be earned and not obliged upon.

The only way for couples to reap mutual respect comes from taking time to learn and understand the other including their likes and dislikes.

Respect in this case means complimenting and positively impacting on the other as often as possible. Being your partner's keeper is the objective here; this means you will have only their best interest at heart.

Maintain close touch

As much as possible, pursue the powerful communication there is in touch as it is a sense that has power to bring out so much vitality. Hug your spouse as often as possible, hold their hand tight when together or when walking with them. You'd be surprised at just how much a passionate touch or hug can impact on a boring or strenuous day. In essence, ensure you maintain skin contact as it brings out this inseparable feel of assurance.

Speak your heart out

The worst mistake that couples makes every now and then is going about their lives assuming that the other knows what they feel for them. That assumption remains a relationship killer every time. So you

got married because you first loved each other, but with so much pressure that life subjects us to, constant assurance works impressively so.

Again, when we express our feelings towards our partner, it should be genuine and not fabricated. Don't say you miss them or that you long to be with them just to make them feel better or because you are playing your matrimonial roles, say it because you mean it, out of conviction.

Love them, every chance, deep!

One fact that comes with being human is that sex is never enough in marriage. Take every opportunity to explore the heights of passion with your spouse. The best thing about sex in marriage is that it comes with no limitations, and only the two of you can determine the heights. So while it is perfectly okay to postpone love-making, prolonging it however can have adverse effects.

As a woman, you need not to wait for your husband to exhibit infidelity to dedicate substantial effort to intimacy and sex. Again, given the overwhelming benefits of sex including relieving stress, boosting immunity and self-esteem, burning calories and improving cardiovascular health, there is no reason to not freely participate.

So get naked, let your body explore your spouse's, pursue unimaginable heights of passion for your spouse both physically and emotionally. Try different ideas and make it fun and not some sort of obligation or chore. Remember you are as young as you feel, so keep a positive mindset. Your love life can still be as spicy and charming as it did when you first got married.

Chapter 5

Writing Love Notes- Communicating Love Best

There are inexhaustible ways to communicate what your heart says and often, saying it through word of mouth can get norm, a bit too adjusted. You may even try giving gifts but have you ever thought of the one thing you are yet to sample? While you neither have to be a diary guru to write, you'd be surprised at just how deep a single word of love written down can sink.

Sure gifts can last for a considerable amount of time but a gift by the end of the day remains someone else's doing. On the other hand, a love letter can last for all times needless to add that it's a personalized piece, made from the bottom of the heart. A letter or note written today to communicate love is not just able to touch the one you love but for the generations to come, that's unmatched legacy your bold action leaves behind.

Have you ever decided to go through old stuff stashed in the basement for just a reminisce or while trying to de-clutter and found a romantic piece that made your heart melt so miserably you broke down into tears? Well, I have. You know that moment when you come across a love letter that your grandfather once wrote your grandmother and even though they may already be long gone, that piece suddenly makes the love they shared feel like a beautiful melody.

Again, nothing beats that time with grandma while going through the family album and all and that love note pops up. To have her take you back in time when they were younger and when they loved each other deeply, that moment can only be archived, for it is rare and legendary!

A love letter today

Let's not even consider the future impact a written love letter brings forth and consider what it means for you today, throughout your entire relationship, always. At the beginning of a relationship, there is usually a lot of romance between couples. After a few years in marriage however, romance often subsides leaving behind mere responsibilities and duties.

Despite the fact that you love your spouse deeply, juggling between parenting, and meeting deadlines, you may find that you hardly express your emotions and feelings. This is when love letter writing comes in handy. A love letter can capture your emotions and genuine feelings in the most beautiful and romantic way and hold enough power to not persuade but also remind on, reassure and reignite romance.

How to write one?

Am sure you are now wondering whether love-letter writing needs to be an art. Not ideally but it doesn't hurt to make your message look the part too. The first step however is to put down your tablet, computer, phone or any electronic device. The idea is to go old school, forgetting the waves of technology and embracing the charms from the archives. A well written love letter, in essence the perfect love letter is a key ingredient to keeping your marriage alive and here's how to writing one:-

a) Personalize it; write it on a positive note

We are hand-writing the letter or love note and a special and personal greeting comes in handy. Since you know your spouse best, you also know best what sentiments holds water to sway them away right from the word go!

Intimate salutations like 'dearest', 'beautiful', or 'my most cherished 'The same applies to the ending, try to make it as personal as possible without forgetting to infuse controlled levity and

words of love throughout.

b) Bring out Specific details

You don't just mention why you love them in a single output, make sure to dwell in those small little details about why you love them or why you feel loved by them.

It could be something they said or did; a sweet gesture like a surprise dinner date or a time they cooked for you or how they kiss your favorite spot. In short, detail those small tiny details that are often seen as insignificant, because these have enough power to invoke such sensations that helps keep a marriage alive.

c) Bring out a touch of 'You'

Here you can think of the way you feel when you see them or whenever your spouse is around you. Remember regardless of how insignificant it seems, putting it down on paper accords it great meaning. You can reminisce on the emotional and physical feelings they manage to bring out of you. Like when you write this "Every time I hear your voice, I forget all my problems, there is that assurance that with you all is well".

It makes even greater impact if you can use the present tense especially if you decide to write a love note while your spouse is somewhere within your sight like in the kitchen, sleeping or gardening.

d) Bring out their personality

It compels better if you mention things about them that you appreciate. It could be their

compassion, humility, sense of humor, beauty or resourcefulness. Combine attributes and write on them like how you appreciate how they are able to listen to you, their charming nature or personality.

In essence, detail that you appreciate them on various levels. However be careful not to focus entirely on appearance as this could make your feelings seem superficial.

e) How you present the letter or note

Believe it or not whether you are writing in a hurry or not, presentation remains a million dollar rule. The impact your note is going to leave on your spouse is highly dependent on the first impression.

First and foremost, it is a plus if you write your letter or note on quality paper cause we do plan to have it last for a long time. Where you put that piece is also significant and you can try hiding it among your spouse's personal belongings, get it to them accompanied with breakfast in bed or deliver it to them accompanied by chocolates or flowers at work.

So we are saying that it neither has to be a surprise and there is no specific moment that you cannot present a love note. The best timing however is if you are able to hide it within their belongings, a special yet simple surprise that will make a definitive impression.

Chapter 6

New Adventures, New Bliss, New Perspective

The inevitable

Adventure remains one of the most fulfilling extras in a relationship. Having to spend every day together under the same roof, the boredom can become unbearable and this boredom weakens relationships.

In this case, every possible chance to add excitement should no doubt be pursued. You don't have to be married for a long time to notice that too much familiarity and sharing the same space slowly evokes immense concern within your marriage.

While being married confines you to a home whose space can get quite monotonous and sometimes intimidating, incorporating new adventures in your marriage expose your relationship to a world of possibilities.

New things, new environment, new people and definitely new vibrations and you can bet you will be well on your way to quenching a long suppressed fire within your wildest imagination.

The Basic facts

Past studies have shown that those couples who are able to have fun and play together develop a bonding able to see them through those tough times. You need not work too hard as a couple to enjoy adventures together but should be able to sync into a rhythmic accord. Think about it this way; you

spend every weekend together in the same house, with the same person. How then can it not get boring?

Without an escape plan from the norm, you shouldn't be surprised if your time together with your spouse ends up being just one of the many items in your check-off list, simply regular stuff that you do and a marriage killer for that matter.

What kind of adventure?

The good news is that it doesn't require that much effort to accommodate more fun and adventure into your marriage because remember as a couple, you can enjoy any adventure out there as long as it is something you are doing together. Here are few options to consider:-

Exploration

Did you know that most people today are literally guests in their own neighborhoods? Are you one of those people always using the same routes every time you are going somewhere? Say always using the roads and paths on your right not knowing where those on your left leads to?

Well, it might be indeed time to find that out. Get comfortable in your car on that Saturday afternoon and seek to find out, explore your territory. Again if the weather permits, why not take that walk around, hand in hand, enjoying the gift of life without a single care in the world. You'll be surprised just how much adventure lies unexploited right under your watch.

Sample a new restaurant

Sure you've heard people especially couples talk of their favorite restaurant or favorite joint in terms of dining. Well, that term can get quite monotonous in marriage because can you imagine going to the same restaurant every time, looking at the same ceiling, facing the same walls and meeting the same

people in terms of staff.

The next time you are just strolling around, how about you take note of those prospective joints and restaurants around and actually consider sampling them the next time you are eating out. While you don't have to love them enough to want to go back, you are able to break monotony and you can bet that when you get back to the house, you'll have something new to reminisce on.

A Vacation, a Grand Adventure

Lest you confine yourself solely to work and parenting that you forget you have a life too, how about you take the initiative of planning a getaway. Brainstorm ideas one after the other.

It could simply be a weekend getaway or a vacation of a lifetime. Either way, the idea is to find an avenue to have fun and it could be a lot better if you chose a dream adventure that the two of you share because nothing beats the impacting force of fulfilling a shared dream.

Bottom line

With all said and done, trying out new adventures goes a long way to help beat boredom in your marriage and one of the best ways to overcome relationship boredom is taking advantage of every spontaneous chance to have fun as a couple.

If you find a way to appropriate specific moments in your schedule where you just let yourself go, you find that you are able to surprise each other with fun activities while keeping each other with longevity of where and when the next escapade will be.

Instead of yielding to the temptation of sneaking out on your partner, consider sneaking out with them instead by finding time to break away from regular routines. Remember there is always something

new you can try out there from dessert at a new joint to taking a walk in a nearby park. That fantasy you have of getting lost with a fun person, why not let that be them while taking each day a step at a time.

Chapter 7

Find Time to Share – Keep communication alive

The Odds in Communication

Life is not perfect, there will be high and low moments no doubt and without effective communication, you might just find yourself sinking your marriage deep. No one is born with harnessed skills on communication, just like riding that bike or hitting that baseball, communication is a skill to be adopted.

Knowing how effective communication impacts on a relationship however helps narrow down the odds when it comes to misunderstandings and fights.

They don't have to be norm. Communication can either break or make your marriage. If effectiveness lacks within the conversations you have with your spouse, then frustration, resentment and anger are likely resultants. Respectively, with effective dialogue, couples are able to reap maximum satisfaction and fulfillment as true intimacy and empathy are vibrant too. It will surprise you the heights your marriage can soar with effective communication.

How to communicate effectively

Taking the time to learn how to communicate with your spouse effectively means making every effort to best understand your partner. In deed many marriages would still be saved today if only couples improved on how they communicate with each other and remember that in no way should communication feel like torture with the one you love. Your spouse should rather be the one person

you'd rather talk to at that moment when you feel like you are sailing in a sinking ship, regardless of whether it's them sinking your ship.

Here's how to achieve that:-

1. Pursue transparency

Your partner is not psychic so don't expect them to be able to read you like an open book. Them being able to read in between the lines would no doubt feel ecstatic for you but what if they just can't? Some spouses reason that if their partner really loves them, they should know them well enough to interject their thoughts, emotions or needs.

A grave misconception this is and a perfect recipe for a failed marriage.

So we are talking about transparency in stating your thoughts, needs, emotions or concerns and airing them out without accusations or selfish interests.

2. Be diplomatic

This might start sounding like an entrepreneurship lesson but this attribute comes in handy every time. There is a huge difference between talking and yelling. The moment you start a dialogue with accusations you can bet you'll be yelling and throwing things around. Instead, find a way to air out your concerns, let them listen and if possible offer a practical solution or request for their opinion on the same. All in all, do not expect too much lest you be disappointed. While no one is perfect, do not seek perfection, which you will never find!

3. Reward Good Progress

Let's say you had an issue that was weighing your marriage down. You decided to have a mutual dialogue where each one of you listened to the other. You laid down your concerns or expressed your disappointments with each other and through a controlled dialogue, were able to work things out.

Probably how you found a way to mend the loop holes was by agreeing to make better decisions,

respecting each other's opinion or working as a team. A great resolution and definitely a great achievement

How about laying a milestone reward in recognition of this achievement. You could do something just the two of you to mark this achievement and make it memorable. Say go out and donate to a local community centre, take a hike the coming weekend or do something defining for fun and to mark this achievement. As time goes by, this will be a great reminder of how much you've overcome in the past and the future can only be promising!

4. Make it about you two and not you

Have you ever listened to spouses who only keep ranting about what they want? 'I' and 'me' are a killer approach in a marriage and should be used seldom and for the right purpose. The moment you get married you become an item, everything around you impact on the two of you as a couple and not you individually.

This means you form the habit of including "we", "you" and 'I'. So instead of saying something like 'I need to talk to you', replace that with 'we need to talk'. Realize it's not about you because if it were, then you wouldn't be seeking to talk to them. It should be as important to converse for your partner as it is for you so never treat it like a one-way-street scenario. Learn to listen; it is the only way to move forward and to really communicate.

Chapter 8

Give Flowers, Just Because.....

Women love flowers

Why do most men have this mentality that giving flowers is only dependent on occasion? Think about it this way, florists stock up fresh flowers daily and do you think that they stock fresh flowers because the one from the previous day was trashed? No, they did because some incredible guy stopped by and bought a bouquet to help better communicate his wife's worth.

Women love to receive flowers just because and not simply because its valentines or your anniversary. Then it's not a surprise anymore because it becomes norm. Again, one of the best tricks to beat marriage monotony is by giving flowers.

Flowers Says a Mill

Did you know that you are bound to make a much memorable impact on your wife if you decided to surprise her with flowers than buying her the most expensive item on her wish list?

Well, as it is, women always regard the gesture of receiving flowers with so much appreciation and awe than any other gift out there. So flowers makes a woman feel special in more ways than one. In fact, flowers have long remained a secret to a woman's heart, a trick that never loses touch through time.

Allow a woman to describe the emotions and vibrations experienced from a bouquet of flowers and

no doubt you will never want to miss out on bringing out the sensual effect women derive from flowers.

The Exclusives

So we are advocating for the art of men giving flowers just because, but lest we forget those occasions when flowers cannot be a last minute resort.

The worst thing for a husband to do is to form the habit of getting his wife flowers to better apologize, because you can bet that the moment she start associating them with your disappointments, then they start to repel with her. You don't want that, you want to be able to leave an impression every time your able florist does the honor of advocating that spectacular selection for you. That also means you choose your florist wisely.

So you are not just giving flowers because she is mad, you also giving them because she is happy and what better way to complement happy moments and mend our mistakes? Flowers every time!

Just because

This is best reason to give the woman you love flowers. Giving them randomly and especially when she least expects them. Women love an un-predictive character with men, they love surprises, they love fantasy and they love to be spoilt. In essence, what reason would you have to find your wife not deserving of immeasurable loving if she is indeed the apple of your eye? You will be surprised how much appreciation this gesture will get you every time, in absolute kind needless to say! Since she can't buy you flowers back, she will give you that limitless attention and pampering, that you can bet!

Birthdays

It is okay to buy her cake and all, but flowers on her birthday will mean a lot more. Not because you

are trying to be infectiously romantic but because you know she deserves it. Think about it this way, she gets to cook, do laundry and keep the house in order, raise your kids in every sense of the word and work at the same time.

Why not make her birthday feel special. Start the day with a bouquet of flowers delivered to her work place, she will melt real hard! Let her know that she can just let herself go that night and simply relax because you'll cook and help with the dishes. Make it a special dinner for her if possible.

Offer her a rejuvenating massage and keep more flowers coming even at home. Not because you are trying to be the perfect husband because you can never be, but because you choose to find this day special for her enough to make it the day you appreciate all her efforts and sacrifices every single day!

Anniversaries

This one you just don't forget to remember! In fact, most arguments and fights that couples have evolve from such negligence of dates that matter to women more than men will ever know.

While the day you got married meant the world to both of you, it needs to continue being a day you commemorate that defining moment. What better way than to make sure that flowers make an opening speech on that special day? Giving flowers will help reassure her that nothing has changed over time as she remains the most beautiful and loved.

Valentine's Day

When it comes to valentine flowers, I guess this is rather obvious. How do you not buy your wife flowers on this special day? Flowers are expensive and the decision to stop by the florist must be well appropriated in terms of spending. Take away the insane calculations of better things you could

have done with the money you spend on her valentine's flowers and simply go all the way.

You don't want your wife picking up ingenuity on your buying her flowers. Regardless of whether you are on a tight budget with mortgages and all, that's okay because valentines only comes once a year. So buy her that bouquet, couple it with a sweet gift to express your love. In essence, regardless of how long you've been married, love should never grow old, it can only be sweeter.

Chapter 9

Get Flirty, as if You Just Met Them

Flirt to communicate love

Remember back in the day when you topped the game when it came to flirting? A time you were entirely desperate to woo your present wife before you finally managed to do it? Now that lots of time has elapsed and you already have her for keeps, don't let your marriage get gloomy simply because you think you've lost your magic touch.

With men, flirting should never be lost because it remains one of the most charming traits to get a woman down on her feet. However, husbands too love it when their women flirt back; it's a way to communicate that intimacy interest. Every man wants to feel that a woman wants intimacy just as much as he does.

While your flirting in high school is not something to pride in today, you can choose to pride in flirting with your spouse because now you've won the gate pass, there are no heights too high.

Making the choice to flirt with your spouse communicates so much. It brings the point home that you still find him/her attractive or charming and that they remain a fantasy you cannot have enough of.

How to flirt with your spouse

Think of it this way, you already have the upper hand because no one knows your spouse better than you do. By definition, flirting is meant to communicate attraction and or sexual interest to the other person.

So don't just flirt with your spouse to reap sex, flirt for that and much more! Flirt with them because you still find them damn attractive, it's okay to even do it in front of your kids, your relatives, your friends or colleagues. This ignites a sense of love and limitless bond to be emulated. Also a healthy desire of being with your spouse and open proof that your best place is with them.

So now that we know it's okay, healthy and incredibly beneficial to flirt in marriage to, how do we go about it? Here are several unmatched ways to flirt with your partner or spouse:-

Leaving a note

Say you are planning a trip and you won't be seeing them for a day or two. Leave a romantic note under their pillow so when it's time to retire to bed and you are not there, they get to know how much you'd have wanted to be there. Write something like "Darling, you know I am already going crazy thinking about you right now. I can't wait to be home!".

So you are not going on a trip and you won't be seeing them all day, leave a note on their car rear view mirror with something romantic and sweet.

Sending a text

Again, women love surprise texts, especially if she has to be at home parenting your kids. Send her a surprise text every now and then letting her know just how much you appreciate the things she does.

Something like "Thanks for being the best mum and the best wife. I love you more everyday". Such a gesture works like a fuel recharge with a car and regardless of how much parenting is driving her

nuts; she remains assured of your love, support and appreciation.

On the other hand, you two are probably both working and will only be seeing each other in the evening. Send him a surprise text, letting him know how awesome he is to you and how appreciated he is. Something like, “Sweet heart, this pile of work can wait because I just can’t wait to be home where you are... on my way home!”

Probably he had no plans of closing work earlier either, but now he knows someone somewhere is going to be ecstatic to see them and he’ll want to beat traffic just to get to you on time.

Emails

Thanks to technology, the world of impossibilities is long behind us now. While seated in the office regardless of how hectic your day at work is, find a moment to share something sweet and romantic through email and allow it to carry a sensual feel.

It could be a forwarded email both romantic and communicative. However, regardless of the fact that she is bound to question whether you are indeed the author, she doesn’t need the conviction you are not. That means that you remember to erase forwarding details.

Search the internet for sweet quotations or images to help better express something beautiful to send to your spouse. We all need some sort of assurance every once in a while and there is nothing as

moving like when you open your emails at work to find a sweet gesture from your spouse.

Maybe you can send it with an apology for something you did wrong, a reminder that you are thinking of them or a birthday or anniversary wish. You certainly can never go wrong with emails!

Music

Music is a great way to express, share and ignite intimacy. While she is in the kitchen, play some romantic music then walk behind her with an embrace inviting her to have a dance. Say she was busy trying to get the dishes done before the baby wakes up. Convince her to leave them first and since she will still be concerned about them, promise to be the one to do them later. Music works like magic.

Again, women should not always wait up for men to start with the flirting. Why not just play some sexy music on your phone then go up in front of him with a sexy dance. It will catch him as a surprise no doubt and one that will most likely be short-lived because with men's primitive nature, he will be kissing and holding you so tight carrying you to the bedroom.

While it's plain obvious than men never get enough of seduction, wouldn't it better to be the one to seduce your husband than risk someone else succeeding at it?

Bedroom Fantasies

The moment you get married, you start sharing everything and therefore there are no secrets or marked territories. This also means that you cannot afford to shy away from speaking your mind when it comes to intimacy.

You know those bedroom fantasies that you always have but are always afraid of crossing the red-line? How about you find a way to explore them? Exploring your inner sexual territories and those of

your spouse's can help spark a gem into your sex life.

However, just because you owe your spouse marital rights don't mean you don't have rights of your own. It is important to let your spouse know what it is that you are comfortable with and what you just cannot tolerate. Probably the best thing would be to have an open talk, discuss both your innermost sexual desires then come to a conclusion of what you can try out and what you can't.

Studies shows that the highest percentage of those couples filing for a divorce have had to tolerate a poor sex life before they finally realized they had already lost the spark. While not advocating that sex is the major recipe for a happy marriage, let it be known that it remains a definitive aspect. A healthy and intense sex life fosters a happy marriage for it is through sexual intimacy that spouses' share their all without holding back.

Chapter 10

Go Beyond 'I Love You' With Your Affection

Rising above the norm

The words “I love you” can get quite monotonous especially considering they have existed since the beginning of time. In marriage, you must realize that these three words aren't enough and you will need a lot more to get things going on.

When you truly love someone, it needs to be more than just words. It is important to back that promise up with action through sharing, caring moments, gifts all going to show how much more it is they mean to you, beyond the plain words.

Talk is Cheap but Action Gives Meaning

It is very easy to get entangled with the words ‘I love you’ every morning and evening but very easy to forget the need to put those words into action. Eventually, these words lack an attachment of feelings so nothing significant exists to show that the love you feel is real.

In essence, without something to back them up, words mean absolutely nothing! Interestingly someone will say ‘I love you’ for a variety of reasons. Sometimes, good reasons but sometimes for all the wrong reasons. Here's how these words are sometimes used for the wrong reasons:-

- When someone says ‘I love you’ because they know it's what you want to hear.
- When someone says ‘I love you’ because they want a favor from you.

- When someone says ‘I love you’ because they don’t know what else to say.
- When someone says ‘I love you’ because they want to believe they do.

You see, words have no meaning unless someone comes along and gives meaning to them. So every time you mention those three words, how about you find a way to back them up.

Perfecting Intimacy

Did you know that perfecting intimacy with your spouse goes an extra mile to prove what you feel than saying the words ‘I love you’ to them? You see intimacy is the most beautiful thing that a couple can share. Being able to pour out your heart to someone, connecting with them heart and soul, listening to them and offering a shoulder to lean on.

Remember men are naturally not social beings and while it is not easy to get them to share or unburden themselves, as a loving wife, you should never get tired of trying.

Intimacy is about feeling and living as one and the same goes for decision making.

You see if you form a habit of consulting your spouse before making major decisions, asking for their opinion, chipping in your own ideas, then you form a foundation of unity.

It’s about letting them in, allowing them to scale the heights of your entire being, it’s letting the other person know you as much as you know you and understand you just the same.

How to put action behind those words

This one is for men. So you love your wife, so much she means everything to you. While women are emotionally needy and need emotional reassurance every now and then, how do you make sure that your words find treasured meaning? Here are 5 things you could do to help back up those words:-

1. Buy her a gift

If out of the blues you come home with flowers, chocolate or a piece of jewelry, you've put actions behind your words, in a huge way. Who doesn't know that women adore flowers?

Do you ever stop to think what transpires in your wife's mind whenever she passes by that florist or that jewelry store on her way to work? She only has wishes, wishes that you have power to bring to reality while garnering yourself a trophy at the same time.

2. Showing affection

Holding her hand, hugging her, kissing her just because and not cause you are about to leave for work or its time to sleep. Just like when walking in a public and you just put your arm around her shoulder. Those small little gestures of affection are award winning, a plus to help back up your promise of love.

3. Intimacy (Sharing)

Men have been known to be incredibly green when it comes to opening up. So you are having a hard time with the finances, your job is not going so well. Why not just let your spouse become the one person that unburdens all that turmoil? By the end of the day, the marriage vows are for better or worse. Women love it when their husband can open up to them and not try to act too much like God.

4. Make her dinner once in a while

She already has her hands full with taking care of your children, cooking, doing laundry and cleaning the house. Just once in a while, why don't you let her relax and enjoy your pampering?

Cooking for your wife evokes immense heights of intimacy. It says that you appreciate her and her efforts and you find her so amazingly deserving of close to an equal treatment even if just for a day.

5. Give her freedom

No one wants to be held on a leash. Your wife needs your love and not your domination. It is perfectly okay to be protective of her and her interests but never try to be over-protective.

Allow her to choose her friends and let her have a say in running the house, with the finances and defining decision making. Listen to her ideas and opinions without trying to brush them off just because she is a woman.

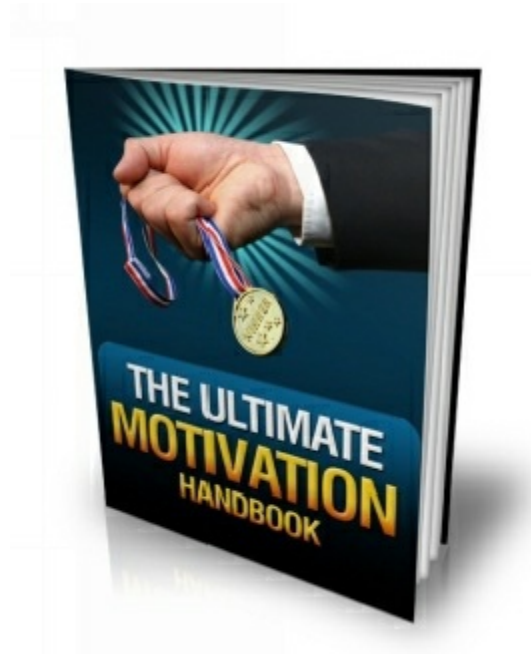
When a woman feels you value her whole being including her personality, then she is able to feel the depths of your love. You can even bet you don't need to say those three words, because she already knows!

Stirring the Nest
A Parent's Guide for Children
Who are Growing Up and Moving On

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The Ultimate Motivation Handbook is the key to overcome the barriers of your success. The success of every goal that you set depends on your state of motivation. This book will show you how to maintain focus, break through barriers, and meet each goal you set for yourself!

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Chapter 1: **Tips and Suggestions to Prepare the Kids to Be On Their Own**

From the moment you decide to have children, and certainly from the moment of conception, you begin preparing. You try to get all the stuff you will need to make the child comfortable and care for him or her the best way possible. Once the baby is born, you learn the hard way you can never be prepared. Yet you still keep trying. You keep learning different ways to do everything, from getting them to sleep to feeding them and potty training and preparing them for school.

Once they reach the age of 18 and walk across that high school stage for their diploma, you feel the winds of change rolling in. Your child is standing before you, looking tall and proud and oh so grown up. Yet are they really? Are they ready to pack up their things and head off to college or out to find their own apartment and join the workforce?

Hopefully, the answer to that question is yes, they are more than ready. But, if you still have concerns, that is why you are here.

Hopefully you are picking this book up at the beginning of their senior year, rather than mid-summer as they pack and prepare to leave your nest. Still, if you have any time left, there may be a few things in this book you can still fit in before they go. That is, if you read a chapter and realize you never discussed that topic with your child.

Preparing your child now has a lot more to do with the mental tasks and responsibilities they will need to understand and be prepared to handle on their own. You don't need to teach them to tie their shoes or button their shirts (hopefully not anyway), but you may need to teach them things like proper laundry division. They definitely need to understand finances, so if that is an area you have glossed over up until now, it is time to sit down for a frank discussion before they move out and get a rude awakening.

Think Back: What Did You Need to Know?

One of the first things you can consider is if there were things you wish you had been taught before you left home. Were there things you ran into that your parents never discussed? Now is not the time to stick your head in the sand and hope your kid figures things out.

Instead, it is a time to make sure they know how to handle situations, how to handle themselves and how to think through things if you do forget to cover something.

Conversely, you can also think back on the speeches you heard from your parents and what they made sure you knew before you headed out. Is there anything in particular that they taught you that really helped and you have yet to pass that information on? Now is the time to share that with your child and prepare them for the changes to come.

Think Ahead: What Phone Calls Do You Want to Avoid?

You want to hear from your college-age offspring. This is a given. However, there are certain phone calls, like the one where your child is calling from jail, which you never want to receive.

Try to imagine yourself getting phone calls from your child that would disturb you or be downright impossible to handle. This can range from small issues, like a wrecked car, to more serious ones like expulsion from college. As you imagine scenarios, do your best to make a list of things you can prepare your child for so you don't receive the phone calls on that subject.

Be frank with your child. Let them know that they are an adult now and need to act like one. Try to help them understand that certain things can lead to significant consequences, and you will not be there to mop up the mess if things get serious. Then, have them give you the what-if scenarios for if bad things do happen to them in school or at a location where you as the parents are not readily available.

Break Out the Family Members Emergency List

Depending on where your child is going to school, there may be family members that will be closer than you geographically. If this is the case, give them a call and have a serious discussion of whether they are willing to help out if an emergency were to arise. Be very specific with them, so they can tell you if there are certain situations that would be beyond their ability to help or desire to get involved with.

Next, have that list of family members handy and discuss them with your college-bound child. Let them know if the aunt and uncle closest cannot help beyond basic advice, while the cousins that are a bit further away geographically but still closer than home will be more willing to help with a broader scope of issues. It used to take a village to raise a child. For some families, this is still true. For others, the hands-off, you are on your own approach seems more common. Now will be a time you realize just how your family feels, in the case you weren't already aware of their opinions.

Honesty now can be a valuable tool to share with your child. If you had any bad experiences, now is the time to share those in the hope your child can avoid them. While they may be embarrassing, they can prove to be valuable to helping your child be prepared. These stories do not have to be tragic and dark tales that you locked away forever. Simple stories of getting locked out of your room when you showered because you forgot to take the key can stick with your child and help them avoid the situation themselves. There are many things you can share with your child to help them be ready for life away from home. Do not hesitate to share those things while you can.

Finally, remember that when they leave for freshman orientation will not be the last time you see them. There will be opportunities to discuss issues and keep teaching your child well into their senior year of college. Take heart in the fact that they will call home when they are confused, and you are still their best source of knowledge on all things life-related. The college library and the Internet have nothing on you, the parents.

Chapter 2: **Paying Bills/Handling Finances**

Gone are the days when your child needed to know how to balance a checkbook. Sadly, those are becoming obsolete like the cassette tape and black and white television (showing age there). Instead, banks typically have an online access point and can send texts and emails for possibly fraudulent transactions. This is the good news.

The bad news is your child still needs to understand just how far a dollar stretches, or does not stretch, as the case may be. They need to know that they have to budget for necessities first, like bills and food. Then, they may need to save for a while to get things they previously picked up without thought.

If you are sending them to college with a credit card for emergencies, be sure to stress what those emergencies might be. A sale at their favorite clothing store or a great new system for their car would not make the list of emergencies.

Also, make sure they understand what being out on their own will mean. This is especially important for those entering the workforce and planning to support themselves immediately. Even those heading to college and sharing an apartment with friends needs to understand the best way to prioritize their finances.

Personal Finance 101: Helping Your College Student Spend Smart

The following tips have been found to help college students live on a budget and understand the money they are spending, rather than running mom and dad into the red by depending on their support. Many students in college do not understand they are extending the home budget to cover them in another residence because they depend on mom and dad to keep forking over money to help them live however they want, with no consideration for the consequences. The following tips are to help that college student understand money better so once they graduate they will already be a smart spender and be able to cope on the salary they get from their first job. Hopefully they will shoulder some of the responsibility for their own money by working while going to college. For some families, however, that is not feasible or is simply not preferred.

1. Set a Budget (2.1)

Write down what money you have available each month. Then, figure out expenses exactly, like rent, groceries, gas money and any other bills that are due monthly. Then, allocate a small amount for spending money. Keeping track of yourself in this manner is helpful so you don't fall short when a bill is due.

If you have trouble with this, use a notebook and keep track of every receipt you get for the month. Once you look at all your expenditures for the month in one place, you may realize you are over-spending on certain items. Then, you can work to correct your bad habits.

2. Live within Your Means

This is key and is also the biggest issue for college students and individuals who recently left home to live on their own. Emphasize self-control and focus on saving. While these aren't the fun things to do, they are the responsible ones and will allow you to have more fun and get the things you want in the long run, once you are better at saving and can prepare for a big expense properly.

3. List Goals

Having your goals listed in written format gives you a reality check when you need it. SMART goals are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely (2.1). Using this measuring stick to write down goals you want to achieve can greatly increase the amount of money you make in the future.

How? A study of Harvard MBA students showed that the ones in the program that had specific goals they had written down ended up making 10 TIMES as much money as their classmates. That was simply a result of having goals, writing them down and staying focused.

4. Respect Credit Cards

Credit cards are nice to have and can come in handy if there is an emergency. However, it is far too easy to buy something and plan on making payments that can become a huge drain both on your finances and a big hit to your credit score if not kept up with. Therefore, if you have a credit card, keep it at a balance of zero and understand what your interest rates are at all times.

5. Pay Bills ON TIME

If you have a bill to pay, keep in mind that paying on time not only helps your credit score but it also means you spend less money. Each time you delay paying that bill, a penalty will occur. Sometimes the longer you wait, the greater the penalty.

6. Have an Emergency Fund

Recommendations are to have three months worth of living expenses squirreled away so you have money when an unexpected big expense comes up or you are unable to make money for a month or two for some reason. Therefore, plan ahead. If you have trouble saving money you know is there, consider having part of your paycheck automatically deposited to or transferred to a savings account each time you are paid or once a month.

7. Practice Smart Saving

As noted above, it is wise to pay bills on time. Also, there are checking accounts that can be opened for free. These are two of the ways you can practice smart saving. What are some of the others?

- Save Change. Count and roll it yourself, then turn it in to be put in either your emergency fund or a savings account. It is money you would otherwise not remember you have, so use it to your advantage.
- Buy used textbooks. Sites like Amazon offer used books at reasonable prices. Also, college is one place that buying the hardback version could save money. When in college, having a soft cover means it is lighter to carry back and forth to class. Therefore, for a bit more strain on your shoulder and your bookbag, you can save a few dollars. It may be worth it in the long run.
- Learn about the various places online to get free music and software. Also, keep track of your electronics and keep your room locked to keep them safe.
- Clip coupons for food, avoid takeout or simply get food that does not require you to tip the server. Also, in that respect, do not tip the pizza guy if he does not actually earn the tip by being on time and being civil at the very least. (2-2)

8. Try for Scholarships

While it may not save you money during your college years, attempting to get scholarships and minimize the amount you need to take out in loans means you won't spend a decade or more after college paying back the loans. College can be a pricey investment, and you may not realize how long even a reasonably-priced college will have you making payments once you enter the career field of your choice.

Chapter 3: Laundry

In some households, doing the laundry is a task that gets added to the chores list at an early age. At the very least, children understand the basic idea that dirty clothes need to be cleaned (washed and dried, I would assume), folded and put into an area where they can be stored until worn again. The process can be tricky when you factor in the right type of laundry detergent, sorting the laundry, using a stain stick and dryer sheets. However, those processes may need to be laid out in detail, even for those who have done their laundry at home. Doing laundry at college or in a communal laundry room can be entirely different experiences.

Having the Proper Equipment for Laundry

First of all, is your child ready to be out on their own and do a load of laundry? There are certain things you have to have. If you have laundry facilities in your residence, i.e. apartment, then great. If not, you need to consider what else you might need to get the laundry to the laundry room.

The first thing you need is a laundry basket, hamper or bag. You need a separate container that has the sole purpose of holding dirty laundry and is sturdy enough to lug the laundry to the laundry room if need be. The next thing is laundry detergent (see below). Then, if they have a lot of clothes that need ironing, an iron and ironing board would come in handy. An ironing board is not a necessity but it can help. It can also substitute as a table in cramped quarters if needed. A drying rack to be able to skip the dryer with the more fragile pieces of clothing would be helpful. Finally, prep your college-going child with lots of quarters. They will be needed.

Washing Clothes Properly

First of all, remember to blot stains. Also, do so from the back of the fabric to the front.

Next, divide your clothes into light and dark loads. Remember to empty all pockets prior to washing.

Use hot water for whites, warm water for colors and cold water for darks. Whites get brighter and darks do not fade when you use the proper water temperature. Also, remember to use the correct amount of soap, as too much soap can actually hold the dirt on the clothes because of the suds.

Empty the lint trap. This is very important in communal laundry rooms, as the five people ahead of you using the dryer probably did not bother. Your clothes will get done more quickly if you empty the lint trap. The next step is to remember the dryer sheet. You will be grateful later. Fold immediately to avoid wrinkles and be able to skip the need to iron (3-1).

Using the Right Cleaning Products for Clothes

When it comes to laundry detergent, the cheapest is not always the best, but neither is the most expensive. Your child may have been doing laundry at home for some time now. If not, go over the different types of laundry detergent with your child. Discuss what you use at home and why, and then give alternatives if you happen to use a pricey laundry detergent that won't be ideal for your child. Next, make sure your child has a stain stick. Typically, they will get stained more since they are away and may or may not know how to fight stains on their own.

Dryer sheets are important, so let them know about them and why they are needed. There is no need to increase the amount of static electricity, since they will deal with it regardless if they are living in a dorm room.

Sharing a Communal Laundry Room

Dorms are not like home, where mom will remember the load you forgot in the dryer, neatly fold it and schlep the clothes upstairs to your room for you. They won't magically appear on your bed or in your drawer from the laundry room at college. They will magically disappear though, never to reappear in some cases. That is the worst scenario. The better scenario, in this case, is that someone will simply drag your clothes out of the dryer (or the washer if you walked away mid-project) and leave them on a table or in your basket if you left that in the laundry room.

Remind your child that it is best to stay with your laundry. If not, your laundry basket and clothes can get up and walk away on their own. That is what happens when someone is not taking care of their possessions in communal living. Those possessions become someone else's.

This conversation can lend itself in some ways to your discussion of fiscal responsibilities. After all, those clothes become more important when your child has to earn the money to replace them. This is going to be a wake-up call. Obviously, we hope to protect our children from these types of hard reality. However, if you have been struggling for years to get something like this across to your child, they may learn the hard way. Just be prepared for the call home complaining they have no clothes left, and then you should be prepared to give them tough love and advise them to figure out a solution that is cheap and immediate.

Chapter 4: Safety While Living Solo

Living with your parents, even the ones who strive to make you understand all the dangers that surround them in the real world, can still be a security blanket of sorts. Your child may not fully grasp how dangerous the world can be. Living on or near a college campus or simply living alone can be significant changes that put your child at risk if they are not adequately prepared.

Top Safety Tips for College-Bound Kids

When it comes to living on their own for the first time, your children may be surprised at the things that can be dangerous. The following tips can be helpful to guide them in how to be safe.

1. Let someone, like your roommate, know where you are going when you leave your room.
2. Social Media: Don't share every detail. Some cases of this issue have already come to light. Families have gone on vacation or out for an evening and come home to find they are robbed. Depending on how many friends your child has on Facebook or another social media platform, they will have added people they don't know well. This can be a dangerous situation if they tend to share every detail of their lives and check in regularly at places that are part of a routine. Let them know that every detail does not need to be shared via social media.
3. Keep personal belongings with you. This is particularly important when it comes to electronics. They can be sold easily, so people tend to steal those at the slightest opportunity.
4. Avoid walking alone, especially after dark.
5. Be alert to your surroundings. Avoid listening to music or talking on the phone or texting while you walk. Someone can come up behind you without you noticing. (4.1)
6. Lock doors and windows when you are sleeping or you leave your room. This makes it harder for people to get into your room.
7. Keep some cash in your pocket. Credit cards don't always work and aren't always accepted. If you need something quickly or can't use your card, it helps to have some cash handy.
8. If you go somewhere, like a party, with a friend then leave when that friend leaves. Do not leave yourself vulnerable and alone with strangers. (4.2)
9. Do not invite someone you do not know well to your room or into your residence hall.
10. Consider a self-defense course or buying some pepper spray to carry. These can be valuable in tense situations.

11. Let authority figures know if you see something suspicious. This includes the authorities in the residence hall and campus police when appropriate. (4.3)

Your child is probably already smart and has had some practice in being in difficult situations during their teenage years. Still, this move will be a new experience, and they will be in new surroundings possibly far from home. For that reason, having these conversations and preparing them for their new life can help you feel confident they know all they need to know.

One final note for college-bound students is safety while heading to the car. Freshmen students at college typically are not allowed to have vehicles on campus or are required to park in lots that are as far from campus as possible. Therefore, it pays to be careful while walking to and from a vehicle that is not handy to their dorm. Advise them to carry their keys in their hands as a protective measure. Make sure to have a light handy, even if it is the flashlight feature on their phone. That way, if they are in areas that tend to be dark and isolated, they can be prepared for other people that may try to take advantage of a potentially dangerous situation. If possible, advise them to use the buddy system and take someone with them. This is particularly important for females. The case of date rape is significantly higher on college campuses, but that does not mean that rapists do not take advantage of any situation where a female is alone and vulnerable.

In the end, the best advice is to be proactive. Think about the positive and negative scenarios that can occur, without causing outright paranoia, and try to be prepared so as to avoid the worst possibilities.

Chapter 5: Teaching Children to Trust Instincts

When it comes to living on your own, in the end you only have yourself to trust. Therefore, you need to emphasize to your child exactly how much they need to trust their instincts. People have been saved by their gut reaction to certain situations and scenarios that play out in front of them. Therefore, for your child's safety and peace of mind for both of you, it is important to let them know they are intelligent and well-prepared as long as they trust their instincts.

First Impressions

For a student that is new on campus, there are always going to be people looking for easy targets. These people may appear kind and concerned about your child. However, they give off a vibe that, if you are listening to your gut instinct, will be very apparent during an introductory meeting. Therefore, your child should definitely trust that first impression that they won't want to be friends with this person or that person.

Another thing to consider with a first impression is the effort the person put in to dressing and preparing for the meeting. If your resident assistant is still in pajamas and reeks from a night of partying, you probably won't be getting a lot of help from that quarter this semester.

Meanwhile, if one of your study partners for a group for class shows up drunk, that person is not likely to do their share of your project. It may be a good idea to talk to the professor about an issue like that, so the group isn't dragged down by one careless individual. These ideas and more can be discussed with your child before they leave the nest. That way, you know they can trust their instincts and will react appropriately.

Feeling Comfortable

Being comfortable in a situation from the beginning is important. This also goes along with first impressions. Let your child know that if they arrive at a new location and are not comfortable immediately, there are two things to consider. If they feel uncomfortable simply because it is a new situation and it is a minor discomfort, they can give it a shot. However, for those feeling very uncomfortable and not having a blatant reason to feel that way, trust their first impression of the situation and get out fast.

Feeling of Danger

Following the first two aspects of new situations and dealing with new people, let your child know that if they have a feeling of danger, they should remove themselves from the situation immediately. Danger can come in many forms, so it pays to just go with the feeling and get away rather than trying to wait out the feeling and end up in a worse situation because you stayed after the initial fear took hold.

Danger is serious, and a feeling of danger typically arises for a reason. Make sure the feeling of danger is coming from your sixth sense, rather than a niggling thought in your mind that may be interfering with your actual subconscious, which provides the best conscience available for you.

Chapter 6: **Cooking Skills**

Moving in on campus can mean a dining hall and prepared meals for your now-independent offspring. However, some residence halls still offer a kitchen to cook meals. All residence halls offer the capability to have a microwave in the room for meals that are quick, so when your child misses the dinner hour or sleeps in past breakfast, there are options.

The first step would be grocery shopping pointers, so they can keep some foods in their room that won't go bad quickly. They can choose healthier options that will fit in their miniature fridge and allow room for other foods and drinks.

If your child is moving into an apartment with other people, however, it is time to make sure they understand how to cook, how to eat healthy and what to watch for when it comes to foods staying fresh.

Boiling Water

Boiling water seems basic. However, once the water is boiling, then what?

You may need to discuss the food that will be cooked, like pasta. Discuss the directions if it is boxed pasta they are cooking, and let them know that timing the pasta or taste testing it is important so they get properly cooked pasta and not cardboard-tasting noodles.

Boiling water also can be used for eggs and hot dogs and other fare that will be crucial to sticking to a college kid's budget.

Eating Healthy

Obviously at home you have been trying to get your kids to eat their vegetables. However, now is the time to see how much of the importance of a balanced diet they really understand from years of you trying to feed them one and a few classes on diet and health during their school years.

Talk to them about the food pyramid, USDA recommendations and caloric intake on a daily basis. The freshman 15 is what the initial weight gain of a college freshman is called.

Share some simple tips with them, like the following:

- There are healthy foods that can be stored in your dorm room without taking up the mini-fridge. These include nuts, seeds, dried fruit, multi-grain crackers and rice cakes. Certain types of fresh fruit like apples and citrus fruits can sit out for up to two weeks, leaving you the ability to keep them and keep other foods in the fridge (6.1).
- Remind them that the meal plan is a requirement. So when they are eating in the cafeteria, they should grab a piece of fruit on the way out. Taking food out of the cafeteria technically isn't allowed, but at the same time, you are paying for the fruit. So, if it is sitting out, encourage them to take a banana or an orange with them for a snack.
- Advise them to look up healthy recipes. When you see the pictures of good food, you want to have good food. Don't look up junk food, your tastes will turn in that direction accordingly.
- Snack smart. That doesn't mean avoiding a snack after midnight if you are studying and still awake, but it does mean opting for a light snack, like popcorn, instead of calling out for pizza.
- Tell your child to pay attention to what they eat. If they consistently have issues after eating a certain meal, like lack of concentration, then it is time to start reaching for something else for dinner. Likewise, if a particular food seems to bring clarity, add that food to the test day meal plan.

Check Freshness

Some foods will go bad and quickly. Remind your student that they need to keep track of when the milk will go bad. Also, foods like cottage cheese and juices can go bad, even in the fridge. Let them know that they can get sick from eating foods that are beyond the expiration date. The last thing your baby will want is to be extremely ill without mommy there to help them get better fast.

Also, one of the toughest things for you is going to be hearing your baby sick and knowing they are too far away to help.

Finally, food poisoning is a serious illness if not addressed properly. Therefore, you don't want them stuck in their dorm room with food poisoning and potentially getting really ill as a result.

Cut Back on the Caffeine

College is a time when many students realize they need to study far too much to worry about sleep. As a result, they turn to substances that can help them stay awake to study and go take the test after a sleepless night. Caffeine in coffee, energy drinks and products like caffeine pills, can be dangerous if it is something they depend on for daily functioning.

Make sure your student is aware of the dangers and also aware of healthier alternatives, including not procrastinating so the all-nighter is not necessary. These efforts can go a long way toward helping your student avoid bad habits and sometimes life-endangering choices for the purpose of getting a good grade.

Part II: How Parents Cope with Being "Empty Nesters"

Chapter 7: Now What?

Deal with the Emotions

First, you need to deal with the sadness and anxiety that occurs when your last child heads out on his or her own. You will be sad that your baby is all grown up, sad that you won't have the close relationship you had while your children lived at home and sad that you won't have them around to help and/or be a pain.

All of this is normal. Take on the emotions as they arise. Recognize that your child is not gone forever, but the relationship that the two of you had while they lived at home will continue to change now. At first, they will be in college and still somewhat need your guidance. Then, they will start a first job and call home now and then for advice on certain aspects of life. Relationships will come and go, and eventually they will find “the one.” Once they begin to share their life with that special someone, things will change once again. Be accepting and flexible and there is no reason you and your children can not maintain a healthy relationship.

This process is sped up a bit if your child skips the college life and goes straight into the workforce. Take time to accept this as well, and again, you should be flexible and willing to work with your child to maintain a good relationship.

Tips on Being a Couple Again

So it has finally happened. Your child or children have left to live on their own. You have the house to yourselves again.

Now What?

Studies have actually shown that once you are over the initial shock of your children leaving, marriages actually improve with child-free homes, hitting their highest level of happiness at the 35 years of marriage mark (7.1).

Communicate

Talk to each other. Now that there are not kids to be the go-betweens or the main topic of conversation, you might find yourselves staring at one another and marveling at the silence. There is nothing wrong with that. However, you may get frustrated with one another too. That will become an issue.

Instead, focus on communicating your needs and wants. Share new ideas you have or the desire to have new ideas, if you are struggling to come up with new suggestions for the two of you. See how each other's day went, which may be something you have forgotten in the years of discussing all the things that happened that day for your children or with your children. Focus on the two of you again.

Have a Positive Attitude

As with any change, how you go into the situation mentally can have a huge impact on the results of the new situation. Therefore, be positive that you and your spouse can use this time to benefit greatly. Have confidence that you will find new ways to love one another and remember all the reasons you have been together as long as you have.

Love is a beautiful thing, and it can show you exactly what you appreciate about each other, glossing over the flaws and frustrations you have with each other. Be positive that you can find all those good things, and being alone together in the house won't seem as daunting.

Try New Things

Take up a new interest together or expand on something you both have enjoyed but never had time to pursue while your children were around. Put in a new garden together, start taking lessons for cooking, kayaking or any activity that you want to become better at and can share the experience.

New interests challenge the mind, and taking up something new together can remind you of the ways you complement each other. You and your spouse may be very different, but you can really come together to solve a problem or address a new learning situation. This can rebuild any areas of your marriage that struggled a bit while you were both focused on raising the little beings you brought into the world to be positive contributing members of society.

Talk About Your Sex Life

Sex is a very important issue for married couples. For those who survive raising children, you have found a routine or a method of handling your sex life that works for you. However, if you have found it getting stale or worry that it has for your significant other, now is a great time to shake it up.

Discuss your sex life – and sex in general – with your partner. See if they honestly have been holding back. Shake things up a bit. Take advantage of an empty house for those fantasies you have been having but never shared. Remember what it was like when you were young and before you had kids. There is no reason that the passion you had then can't be recreated now (if it has disappeared in the first place).

If this is an area where interest waned while you were raising your children, it can even become a new interest to pursue for the two of you. There are books that can be read, different approaches to discuss and even the mechanics that can be adjusted if so desired. There is plenty to talk about. Now you two just need to take the time and start the conversation.

Not all couples have an issue with their sex life. However, this is still a great opportunity to do new things if you are so inclined.

Chapter 8: Develop New Interests

Once you have one less person in the house (or two or three or six less people), you have less laundry to do, fewer dishes to keep up with and not as many groceries to buy. Keeping the house clean gets a lot easier because there are fewer people to track in dirt and move items around or leave them in unusual locations.

So once the vacuuming, dusting, organizing, dishes and laundry are done, suddenly you find yourself sitting in front of the television a lot more or finishing a lot more of those books you put away for the day when you have time. Now you have that time, and you have lots of it.

Instead of being bored at home and sinking into a depression because you have lots of time to think and perhaps feel unsatisfied with life as it is, consider picking up new hobbies. There are plenty of opportunities you can look into now that your home is child-free and you do not have to be a chauffeur or lend your car out and worry the entire evening about a teen that may or may not be getting into trouble.

Look into the following opportunities in your community:

- Continuing education classes are usually available at a college, high school or community center. Take the time to learn about new things or things that have interested you but you didn't have the time to delve into them thoroughly. These classes can also be a gateway to a new hobby.
- Hobbies can be anything that takes up some time and helps you learn new things and keep your mind challenged. You can do anything from crafts, scrapbooking, model making, remote controlled car driving to cooking, learning about computers, salsa dancing or geocaching.

- Enroll in a fitness program or exercise class. This is good for both your mind and body.
- Check into volunteering opportunities. This will help you interact with other people and keep your mind and body occupied so you don't increase the amount of time you spend on the couch at home.
- Explore. This can be visiting different neighborhoods to take walks or going out to eat at restaurants you didn't visit because the kids wouldn't like it or it was a bit fancier than was appropriate for a family dinner. Take full advantage of your freedom and use it any way you thought of before but didn't have the chance to actually do.

While you and your spouse may have been kept constantly busy having kids in the house, you do not necessarily have to spend every free moment together now. You can choose to take up new hobbies together or spend more time together. However, each of you starting a new interest on your own is healthy as well. Asserting independence and remembering you are an individual can be important to your growth and improvement as a couple. That way, each of you has something new and interesting to bring to conversations and to share with your spouse.

Learn New Ways to Keep in Touch with Your Child

Your relationship with your child is going to change a lot in the coming years. Now that you aren't under the same roof, or in the case of a child in college not under the same roof the majority of the time, you won't see each other at dinner to discuss the little things that happened that day. Instead, it is time to get used to a new method of communication – or using several.

Email and phone calls will be great ways to keep in touch. Likewise, texting and/or instant messaging if you are a parent that is up-to-date on social media can be a good way to check in. Just make sure to be giving your child some space to do their own thing.

Chapter 9: Get a Dog

Ok, so you may not be a dog person. Obviously, then, do not run out and bring home a new furry, four-legged family member. Adding a pet to the family can be a bad choice if you are working and the pet will be crated at home for long hours or left alone while you pursue the many new interests you are going to pick up to fill the empty space your child is leaving in your home.

If you aren't finding a lot of new interests and need some motivation, and if you will be home enough to properly care for another living being, then getting a pet can be good for your health.

People in their older years live longer when they have a pet. That pet gives you a reason to get out of the house, to exercise and even to socialize. Therefore, if you are not handling the empty nest well and want a companion that keeps you going and provides unconditional love, a dog is a great idea.

In studies of the elderly in a nursing home, regular visits from animals

If you are working long hours or pursuing those new interests, a dog may not be a good fit. However, if you are lonely and would like another being in the home (this can be the case for a solo parent or a set of parents that communicate with each other and still find they would prefer another body in the house), a cat can be a good pet to get as well. Cats are more independent, so the long hours alone won't bother them.

Cats are litter trained and not as destructive as a dog can be (if you get them scratch posts and other toys) so they can handle being home alone for several hours of the day. Yet they still provide that love and companionship you may be craving. Having a cat may not

have been studied and shown to extend life spans as much as a dog does; however, cats still provide some of the health benefits owning a dog can.

For example, having a cat has been shown to lower blood pressure, cholesterol and triglyceride levels (9.1). Also, because pets tend to reduce stress levels, both dogs and cats have been shown to help those who suffer a heart attack recover faster than the ones who do not have pets at home.

Other studies have shown that elderly nursing home residents benefit greatly just from visits from animals. Known as pet therapy, having a dog or cat visit on a regular basis helps reduce stress levels and improve mood. Both of these are shown to help people live longer (9.1).

So, while you may not be a nursing home resident, you can still greatly benefit from having a pet. People of any age have lower stress levels and are happier when they have a pet in the home. They also tend to be more social and more active because of said pet.

Taking a dog for a walk means you get out of the house. Taking them to training classes, a dog park or other location away from your neighborhood where other people congregate almost guarantee that you will talk to some other person just because of your location and the fact you are with a dog. All of this lends to a more active social life. This is good for you in many ways.

Add to that the other benefits and you may rethink your position on not wanting to deal with dog hair and/or feces.

Part III: What to do if your Adult Child Possibly has to Move Back Home

Chapter 10: Set Clear Boundaries

If your child has to move back home due to some unavoidable circumstances, it is important to remember some things and look at the situation realistically. Having your adult offspring move home is not going to be like it was when they were growing up. For one thing, you have all gotten used to having your freedom. From the little things like where things are kept in the kitchen to how you walk around the house after a shower and what TV shows everyone watches on what day, there are going to be significant changes to having your child living at home again.

First, remember that you are all responsible adults. Do not let a behavior slide, even in the first days of their return, if it truly bothers you. They can be made to understand that a certain way of doing things is not going to be tolerated in your home. Remember to be gentle in the feedback, depending on what they are recovering from that has sent them scurrying home to live with the 'rents.

Next, decide what you can handle and what you are willing to compromise on. For those things you absolutely cannot tolerate, discuss those first. Deal breakers in sharing your living arrangements must be set out clearly from the beginning. This is particularly important if your adult offspring has come home with their own children in tow.

How to Share Common Living Areas

There are certain areas of the home that, unless you live in a mansion or a set of apartments on your own, those areas will need to be shared by you and your child on a daily basis. Those areas can include the bathroom, living room, office, dining room and/or any outdoor sitting areas or a rec room, if your home has this amenity.

If you have very set habits of when you shower or certain TV shows you do not miss as part of your daily routine, it is best to forewarn your child of this from the beginning. Perhaps they have been coming to visit you for the last five or 10 (or 20) years on a regular basis, and you talked about your routine. However, now they are sharing spaces with you and have no idea how to proceed.

If you find sticking points, like both wanting to shower at 7 am or both hoping to watch different TV shows at 9 p.m., it is a good idea to discuss that and see if you can work out a compromise before the time comes and one of you is left frustrated because they could not complete their daily routine. If necessary, you may even want to work out a schedule, as you would with any other roommate, to share the common areas equally.

Remember, this is your child and they have moved back into your home with you. However, they are also an adult who has been used to doing their own thing for several years. As such, they deserve some respect and compromise from you.

How to Share Laundry Facilities and Kitchen

Some people are very particular about when they do their laundry or how they keep their kitchen. If that is you and this is a vast difference from when your child previously lived at home, then you must be sure to convey these changes to your child in a non-confrontational manner. There is nothing wrong with having changed routines over the years and being attached to the way things are now. However, your child has not been present to observe these changes and may need to be filled in on how things work in your home.

Here again, there may be case for compromise. For the most part, they may be able to work around your schedule and your preferences. However, they are adults just like you. Perhaps they have suggestions to improve things overall. Or, as a gesture of goodwill they may wish to take over the laundry or the cooking. Talk to them honestly and see what they want to do and consider what you are willing to accept.

In this situation, communication is key to everyone sharing the residence peacefully. Avoid tension or confusion by discussing things up front.

Discipline for Children and Watching Grandchildren

Obviously, if there are grandchildren, you love them. However, keep in mind that sharing a home with children can be challenging and tiring. You did raise children, obviously, so you are aware of this. However, as you get older and more set with your habits, it becomes a struggle to be flexible and understanding when it comes to children. This is true even of your grandchildren when you are living in the same home.

Therefore, discuss any potential babysitting with your child well before the situation arises. If you have no problem watching your grandchildren often, feel free to let them know that. However, if you have certain times you will not want to watch them or if you are not planning to watch them, make that clear to their parent.

It is also best to discuss discipline expectations with your child regarding their children. They have set routines that may or may not be the same as what occurred when they were at your house during visits. If their home routine is more refined, you should be made aware of the manner in which discipline is exercised. Also, there will be some changes since their area of your home may be different than the rooms they had while living in their own house or apartment.

It is important to show a united front when it comes to discipline, as children can and will take advantage of any areas that aren't clearly outlined in order to pit one adult against another. Therefore, even if you opt to defer to their parent in all situations, make sure that is a clear and consistent response to the children. They will look to you for guidance and permission for situations. Be prepared for those and above all, remain consistent.

What Bills, if Any, Your Child Will Be Responsible For

You are used to the bills a certain way. Living alone or as a set of adults typically results in bills that do not change drastically. However, having another adult move in or an adult and children will change bills like the electric and heating. It can increase the phone bill or even the cable bill, if you agree to change the package to include channels to entertain the children. Details like this may slip your mind initially. However, it will become apparent that more people are living in your home once the bills start rolling in after they have been in residence for a month or so.

Have a frank talk with your adult child about your expectations on their share of the increased bills. If they have lost their job, give them a time frame on when you expect them to begin helping with the bills. Give them a chance to outline how they plan to help. Then share your hopes on how they will help as well.

Compromise is key, especially when it comes to financial matters. Do not expect to shoulder the bills entirely on your own while they are in residence. That will give them a break, but in the long run it will create more frustration and tension between you. Instead, it becomes a balance, much like it may have been when your child was living at home in their teenage years. There are big differences now, however, since they are an adult and have a better grasp of what it means to keep a household running.

Chapter 11: **Set a Time Limit and Stick to It**

One of the biggest reasons adult children move back home is because of an issue in their life. Whether they lost a job, ended a relationship (marriage or otherwise) or hit a significant roadblock that made it difficult or impossible to continue living on their own.

Therefore, you as a parent are more than willing to lend a hand and offer them shelter from the proverbial storm.

That is commendable. However, you need to set a time frame for this return to the fold and make sure that you help them recover from the issue they face and help them find a way to move forward. Allowing your adult child to move back in without rules (discussed above in Chapter 10, Set Boundaries) and without any idea of when they will need to start standing on their own two feet again will allow them to focus on the issue and the screeching halt their adult life has come to.

Initially, they will be comforted by mom and dad (or one parent or the other) and will be able to lick their wounds. However, over time, if a time limit is not set, they will not feel that drive to get on their feet, find a way to financially guarantee their independence once again and get back to living on their own.

Perhaps you are at a point where you want to sign the house over to them. You feel you want to try new things, whether that be living in an apartment or setting out in an RV to travel the lower 48. It could be that you are feeling your age and are ready to be away from the responsibility that owning a house brings with it. Regardless of the reason, if you plan on turning the house over to your adult offspring, it is best to set a time frame for that changeover and begin making progress toward that goal at a certain point.

That is not to say that as soon as your child's suitcase hits the floor inside the door of your family home, you should start the ball rolling to transfer the home to them. They will need time to recover from whatever shock has put them back a few years to living with mom and

dad.

However, time is of the essence for us all. Therefore, after they have had a few days or a week to decompress from (traumatic event here), then it is time to sit down and make a game plan. As a parent, you may want to create this plan for them. However, that is not your job. They have been living on their own for however long, and despite this setback, they still have dreams and goals and a reasonable grasp of how they plan to get there.

Listen to what they have to say, share your hopes and your abilities to help them get back on their feet, and together you can begin setting reasonable goals to get them to where they want to be when they are once again independent.

Both of you need to keep track of when the deadline is that has been set. It will be easy to fall back into certain routines, and you will find that some aspects of having your child living at home again are comforting for you. Still, you both need to hold onto that deadline in order to prepare for being on your own again. Independence is a key to maintaining self-confidence and improving overall mental health, which extends the lifespan for you and helps them be the parent they need to be for their children (provided they have children of their own). Your single and childless adult child still needs that self-confidence and drive to stand on their own two feet, simply to feel satisfaction with their life.

If the living situation works out for both of you, there is the opportunity to sit down for a serious discussion and amend the timeline. You can always remain sharing living quarters if that is beneficial for you both, i.e. if you need some assistance and your adult child can respect your boundaries and feel their boundaries are respected as well.

The particulars of your situation will determine which of these two approaches are best for you and your adult child.

Conclusion:

Seeing a child off once they have graduated high school and are moving on to the next stage of their life can be frightening. However, once you deal with their departure and the fear for their safety and well-being, you start realizing you have an entirely new chapter of your own life to deal with.

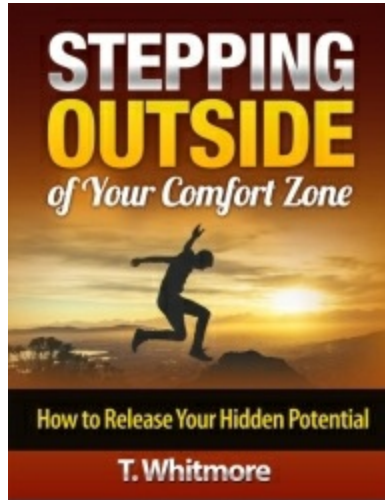
This does not have to be a game-changer for you and your spouse. Instead, implement some of the tactics and ideas discussed above. You and your spouse can find a whole new level of intimacy and take the time to rekindle your love to newer and better depths. You can have the chance to do the things you planned before life got too hectic to do fun and unique adventures.

Finally, having a child move back in does not have to be seen as a failure on your part or on theirs. Take it as an opportunity to be supportive and help they regain their confidence and financial freedom. Make sure you set expectations and stick to the time limit you agree upon. Give your adult child some flexibility but also some responsibilities so they do not forget they are an adult and can survive on their own.

If the situation works out for you and your adult child, however, do not be afraid to take advantage of a beneficial situation. Generations past used to fit two, three or even four generations into a single residence. Adults sharing can be done if that is beneficial to both parent and child. No matter what, remember you love each other and shared a residence before. With some work and adjustment you can again.

Before You Go

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Resources:

Chapter 2:

- 2.1 <http://www.dailyfinance.com/2011/01/24/personal-finance-101-for-college-students/>
- 2.2 <http://www.collegescholarships.org/student-living/save-money.htm>

Chapter 3:

- 3.1 <http://www.instituteoffabricscience.org/content.jsp?pageName=college2>

Chapter 4:

- 4.1 <https://learningcenter.statefarm.com/safety-2/family-1/15-safety-tips-for-college-students/>
- 4.2 <http://www.fastweb.com/student-life/articles/top-10-safety-tips-for-college-students>
- 4.3 <https://rainn.org/news-room/back-to-school-safety-tips-2013>

Chapter 6:

- 6.1 <http://www.teenvogue.com/story/healthy-college-eating>

Chapter 7:

- 7.1 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/dr-terri-orbuch/how-to-keep-your-marriage_b_629789.html

Chapter 9:

- 9.1 <http://www.animalplanet.com/pets/benefits-of-pets/>

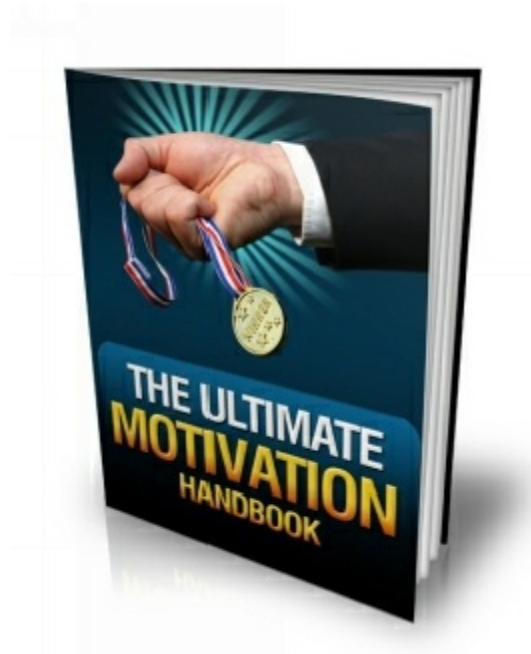
Stuff You Don't Need

***A Mother's Guide to Raising a Child in a
Gadget World***

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Motivation is behind the success of every individual. It is what pushes us to excel beyond our personal boundaries in order to reach our dreams and aspirations. Without it, a person lacks the attitude to hope in a failure and to persevere in a setback.

The Ultimate Motivation Handbook is the key to overcome the barriers of your success. The success of every goal that you set depends on your state of motivation. This book will show you how to maintain focus, break through barriers, and meet each goal you set for yourself!

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Introduction

Welcome to the world of Motherhood!

In today's day and age gadgets seem to be ruling our lives. We are so dependent on gadgets for every little thing. From ensuring that we are awake on time every morning to checking our blood sugar, we are surrounded by gadgets. There is a gadget around for each and every activity of yours.

When it comes to motherhood, however, things are different. Just like everything else, there are a variety of gadgets being sold left, right and centre in the store or online which claim to make a mother's life easier. But do they really make life easy? As a mom, you are always concerned about your child's well being. With soaring prices of almost every item in the baby section these days, wasting money on another gadget for a short period of time is not something every super mom would recommend.

Let's rewind to ten years back, Super mom's were known to be around 24/7, taking care of their children, handling the house, dealing with work and a gazillion other chores. Being a super mom back then was not easy and it probably never will be. However, they survived and succeeded without paying an exorbitant amount on any gadgets which they knew was just going to add to the never ending bills already piling up at the end of the month. Glance back into your own childhood. Do you remember your Mom fiddling around with any gadgets while bringing you up? Quite a sharp contrast with what we see around us these days, isn't it?

In this book, I help you to deal with your child just like your every other mother has done so without the help of any expensive gadget. Tips, tricks and resolutions to problems faced by several super-moms, while raising their children. While I answer some of the fears and questions building up in your mind as you prepare to be a super mom in this gadget infested day and age, you will also gain the confidence to bring up your child without spending a penny on any gadgets being advertised at that baby store you last visited. Sure, times are changing, but so is your child. As your child keeps growing, you might not need that fancy gadget you bought out of impulse. What use are the gadgets then?

Almost every home has stories of how parents raised their children without the help of any technology. Today, of course, along with getting the nursery ready for their child, the first thing most mothers do is to run out and find what the latest gadget available in the market is. Most pediatricians have reported that they feel they are competing with technology and all the gadgets being invented every second day.

Are you ready to bring up your child in a healthy and gadget-free environment? If you are willing to do so, go on and read ahead. Not only will you find solutions for your own problems, but you might just be able to help your sister or best friend facing similar issues while raising their kids.

Our generation turned out just fine after being raised by our gadget-free parents, why not raise our own children the same way?

While this book helps you to understand how children can still be raised without the use of gadgets, you need to consider this book as a friendly conversation which will only help you and not like several other self-help books out there which are all about giving advice.

Chapter 1: Old School v/s New School Motherhood

We've got more fancy technology. We've got all the information available online. But does that make the modern mothers a super-mom or just over confident that they can handle whatever comes their way? When we look back at our own childhood, there are some really sharp contrasts in history.

Mothers back in the day would ensure that they were visiting the doctor and getting the information they required. Nowadays, we end up on Google trying to decipher our symptoms before rushing to the doctor. Who needs to waste time and fuel when we can do our own research and figure things out by ourselves, right? Wrong! The generation of mothers today is so heavily reliable on technology and gadgets, they take things for granted. Now, I have nothing against gadgets. They're good, make life easier but when it comes to motherhoods, would you prefer being a hands on Mom, getting the right information from your doctor rather than reading a few words online written by people who probably have no clue what you are going through and would have had an entirely different situation from what you are going through? Ever thought about it?

Research has shown that new mothers, who often use gadgets as a source to make parenting easier, find it difficult to have a hand on approach to parenting. This, therefore results in using gadgets for everything; i.e. when the child comes of age, a parent would find it easier to keep the child busy with

gadgets (like an iPad etc..) rather than spend some quality time with the child. If we take a look outside, how many children do we get to see playing, or riding a bike? Not as many as we would probably come across when we were kids. Isn't that disappointing?

Old school super moms would head to work, return to cook up a scrumptious meal and stand at the door yelling for their kids. Modern day moms end up dialing their children on their cellular phone to call them back home for dinner. Notice the difference. Old school parenting meant knowing where your child was and what he/she was doing and who were his/her friends who they would be hanging out with, and they didn't need gadgets. In today's world, with the arrival of social media and smart phones, we don't know anything about our kids. Who their friends are and where they've been. We know absolutely nothing!

Dr. Stephanie Rosenberg, a pediatrician based in New York City has been practicing since 1984. She feels that pediatricians are last on the list of modern day mothers. A lot of mothers these days follow information that does not come from very reliable or proper sources. While visiting your child's podiatrist can help you gain more knowledge about your child's health and behavior, there are several other key areas of parenting which are undeniably harder, like getting a full meal on the dinner table and sitting together to have a meal.

The lost practice of sitting together at the dining table and having a proper meal seems to be lost these days. Instead, working mothers are alright with their children sitting in front of the television or even if the family is gathered together at the table, everybody will be busy with their phones. Responding to e-mails, busy 'liking' pictures and status updates on social media. Sounds familiar, doesn't it? When was the last time your family, and by that I mean every member of the family sat down together

for a meal at the table with absolutely no gadgets being brought out every second? Don't remember, do you. With modern day mothers working hard at their job, it gets difficult for them to come home and cook up a proper healthy meal for the family. Not only do the children suffer but at the same time, you lose precious time which you could spend bonding with the children. Think about it, if there is no proper food at the table and neither members of the family sit together to eat, how are you going to bond with your children? This however, not only applies to modern Moms but also to the other parent who is helping in raising the child/children.

As a child, growing up I remember sitting down to a lovely meal with my family. Dinnertime with my kids now is different. I was always amazed how my Mom worked part-time, helped all four of us with our homework and even managed to come and help out fund-raising campaigns organized by the school. As a working woman, I tend to be more interested in my workplace and my career goals, unlike my mother who always wanted to have a beautiful home with good food on the table. But I believe, the reason we give into most or all of our children's whims and fancies is because we have higher expectations and we are not really satisfied by just having a good home with some home cooked food on the table like our Moms. While all of us mother's probably feel the same even today, our circumstances are different. Today several of us are struggling and fed up with the expectations of having to juggle everything on a daily basis. While some of us are blessed with spouses and partners who are willing to share in the daily household chores, some of us aren't all that lucky.

Another thing we notice with modern Moms is them having absolutely zero tolerance or patience for a crying toddler or a changing teenage child. And when faced with a situation, they would prefer letting the child sit with a gadget to keep them busy rather than figuring out what it is that is disturbing the child. Gadgets seem like an easier option out, and modern day Moms have no qualms in handing an

iPad to their child to have him entertain himself with some games or some cartoons. What we don't realize is that gadgets are just a part time solution to resolving any behavioral or habits of your child. Once you give the leverage to your child to demand specifically for a gadget when he is throwing a tantrum, you are asking for trouble. Not only will that spoil your child since he will understand that throwing a tantrum is acceptable since he will get what he demands. Secondly, he will get used to having gadgets around and then there is no separating him from the gadget. As a super-Mom in today's world, you need to ensure that you are doing more than just giving in to your child's every whim and fancy and definitely ensuring that whatever you do, your child is not sitting with a gadget 24/7. If at all your child is entrusted with a gadget, make sure that you know what your child is using the gadget for. The last thing you would want as a parent is your child downloading pornography or visiting websites which are not so child-friendly on any of the gadgets given to them.

I know it is difficult to say no to children these days unlike what it was when we were being raised by our Moms. Our mother's never had a problem turning down our requests especially when we were throwing tantrums with a strict 'No' and their no meant for sure we could forget about getting anything we were demanding for. Unlike these days when a mother says 'No' to her child, she gives in to the child's demands after a while since the last thing she wants is to see her child upset. In older days, children always wanted to please their parents; these days however, it seems to be the opposite. As mother's we are so worried about our child being upset with us, we go all out and are willing to do absolutely anything to please them and give in to all their whims and fancies just so that they can go and proclaim about how awesome their Moms are. Let's face it, as a mother, you will always be awesome. You do not have to give in to every demand of your child and that includes giving them your gadgets just so that you can be left in peace. Once a habit catches on, you will find it difficult for your child to give up that habit. Push your children to go out and play or pick up any hobby which does not include them being glued to gadgets.

Due to changes in the modern way of upbringing, children have learned to play by their own rules which means that parents especially mothers have no say in correcting their behavior. Children would prefer to negotiate the rules and punishments doles out to them rather than obey and follow the rules laid down by parents.

When our parents would tell us to go to our rooms as a punishment, we didn't argue with them and had nothing else to do besides staring at the ceiling. Now if you tell your child to go their room, it's less of a punishment and more of a solo party in their room. Once you get your child accustomed to being around gadgets all the time, there is no way any punishment you give your kids is going to benefit them. They will go to their room and in all likelihood post a status on their social media account. As funny as this may sound, it is becoming quite a trend and to avoid being called out publicly, parents now shy away from punishing their children. Discipline is a must for all children, but with changing times, we can expect less of that for sure. There are some things that pass on from generation to generation, things like confidence, courtesy, love and respect. Mothers impart these values to their child and it is values like these which help nurture and shape up your children. Arianna Thomas, a working mother of three residing in the bay area feels that mother's these days are way past the super-Mom's of the 80's. She feels some Moms today have the flexibility in what they do and it is on their own terms.

As a parent myself, raising children with the help of gadgets needs to stop. A line needs to be drawn; we need to get back to old school methods which will help in bringing order back to our families. As mothers we deserve the due respect which unfortunately is not given to us anymore in the family. We need to work with our children and partner to ensure our children don't miss out on having a fun childhood rather than sitting at home in their rooms in front of some gadgets gifted to them to perform

better at school.

Once you start making small changes and practice them on a daily basis, you will realize that old school ways of being a super mom always trump being a modern super-mom.

Chapter 2: Kids and Gadgets

Recently while visiting a colleague's home, I was amazed at how bored her two year old was with sitting among the adults and not interested at all in her coloring book. The next thing I noticed is she walked down from her parent's room upstairs and had her mother's iPad with her. She knew how to operate it, she knew where her mother kept it and she knew which icon to click so that she could entertain herself by watching cartoons on it. It is unbelievable as to how a kid these days knows how to use a gadget as well as how to use their feeding bottle.

Action figures, building blocks etc. are no longer of any interest to children when visiting the toy store. Research conducted by the specialists at the Michael Cohen group in a recent study have revealed that standard toys now available across the play stores in the country have touch screens which have taken over all other toys as a medium of delight for kids. Several parents who participated in the survey have reported that their children which accounts for sixty percent of the survey have their own portable screen device and play on it often, while forty percent who don't own their own device but use their parents or older sibling's devices play more than often. The children in this survey are all below the age of 12 years. Shocking isn't it? The research also revealed that most children by age 4 stopped playing outdoors and were happier sitting indoors with their portable screen device.

Physical play or Playing outdoors as we refer to it has enormous advantages from mental to physical to emotional. Before you even consider giving in to your child's tantrum just so he shuts up, think

again. Parents prefer gadgets as a way to pacify their wailing child rather than deal with their own child to understand what is wrong. However, later on it does turn into an alarming sight especially with gadgets getting more affordable by the day. Modern gadgets have long-term effects on a child's brain and also impact their overall development. Several experts are advising families to reduce the exposure their children especially toddler's have to electronic gadgets. Below are some of the reasons why you as a super mom need to keep gadgets away from your child.

Brain Development

Even before your child can begin talking and utter his/her first word, their brain is growing in size i.e. your child learns a lot and observes much more than you and me assume before they can even turn five years old and the learning continues till they are adults. The University of Washington has released a report which states that electronic gadgets are not essential in development of a child. In fact, they recommend to most parents to engage in conversations and read to their child to ensure development. As a super mom in the internet age, you need to ensure that you are spending one on one time with your child and not allowing your child to take that time away from you only to spend it in front of a gadget. Research has proven that over exposure to any kind of electronic gadget can lead to negative effect on the functioning of the brain, attention deficiency, impaired learning and cognitive delays.

DELAYED LANGUAGE SKILLS

As per the Academy of Pediatrics in America, educational TV is nothing but a sham. While presumptions are made that screen time can be educational the Academy states that toddlers under the age of four do not have the skills to understand what is going on in the program. Educational TV interferes with 'bonding time' which the parent and child need to share, but lack of bonding time results in delayed language skills. So the next time you even consider getting your child or your niece or any kid below the age of five years an electronic gadget and consider it to be useful or for educational purposes, think again. Not only will you be wasting some good money which can be invested in your child elsewhere, it will also hamper his/her development. Handing over a gadget to any child before he can even walk and talk is a disaster in the making.

OBESITY

Parents who rely on gadgets and the television to keep their child entertained all the time have no clue how much damage they are doing to their child. Children make it a habit to stay indoors with their gadgets or lazing around on the couch in front of their screens rather than go outside and play. Fewer playtimes leads to childhood obesity. Two in every five children in the country are obese, and unless parents take constructive action to help the child in reducing his/her weight, they are bound to grow up into adults suffering from various complications such as heart disease, diabetes just to name a few. Parents, especially a mother must encourage her child to play more. Not only does a child get fit at a playground, he also learns to develop relationships with the other children which will help him to learn to socialize at an early age. Encouraging kids into more physical activity or even exposure to physical activity works like magic instead of inculcating technology in their early years. Physical activity helps promote a healthier lifestyle for the children as they grow. Restriction in movement also leads to delayed development of the bones in a child. The benefits of playing outdoors are not just limited to building relationships and staying physically fit, a small amount of time playing, even if it means just 20 – 30 minutes changes the way the brain functions in a child. Exercise will also help in tiring out your child which means less tantrums and peaceful sleep! So encouraging your child to go out and play isn't just beneficial for the child but for you as well!

LESS SLEEP-TIME

Once a child is handed over any gadgets, it will lead to addiction unless it is used in controlled measure. However, controlling a child's addiction to gadgets is difficult with most parents tough working hours. This results in the child missing out on essential rest time. The gadget becomes an addictive sleeping pill for the child. The glow of the laptop screen and mobile phones deprive the children of a good night's sleep. Parents who do not supervise their children's gadget use and allow them to use gadgets in their bedrooms have stated that they do wake up to cranky and irritable children due to less sleep time. If you suddenly stop your child from using a gadget he is used to having with him in bed, he could get aggressive and wake up extremely grumpy. It gets worse if you have a child who goes to school. Sleep-deprived children are known to have a bad report card in school along with learning issues. Researchers have found that most students living in developing countries with limited access to gadgets have a better report card with good grades in Math and Reading unlike their counterparts in the U.S and other developed economies where children are known to be overexposed to electronic gadgets.

NO LEARNING EXPOSURE

Gadgets kill the development and learning exposure of a child. Instead of learning how a plant grows, or running around learning to play a sport, rolling in dirt, kids with gadgets prefer staying home staring at their screens and learning the ways of the world. That does not benefit them in any way and only causes more harm. If a child is unable to feel a plant, or injure himself while playing, he will never be able to understand how the world functions without experiencing it. Without any exposure, a child can't learn anything, can he? Overprotective parents who feel their child is better off at home, secure from the rest of the world are sadly mistaken. Toddler's can learn a lot from interaction and experiencing.

Reduced interaction due to children spending more time with technology and less time with people disrupts the communication development process of a child. When surrounded by family, a toddler might be unable to improve his communication but his interaction with his family improves and he is able to identify and feel safe and comfortable around others as well. Children who are left exposed to television or gadgets inherit their talking skills from the television but fail when they try to communicate or socialize with other people.

AGGRESSION IN CHILDREN

The National Institute of Health in a study conducted by them have found that dependence of kids on gadgets and other electronic items result in a child not being able to inherit good family values, behavior and over all general well-being.

Games on the internet contain acts of violence, sex, which can be critical to the upbringing of a child. Games containing such aggressive behavior are known to create aggression in a child if he is accustomed to playing such games or watching such videos at a young age. As a child's brain develops over time, he will want to try out something he has seen before, but never done it himself. Children who are addicted to their gadgets and video games are more likely the ones who will disobey and create their own rules. So instead of depending on the gadgets to keep your child calm opt for games and toys which will keep your child occupied long enough to tire him out.

As a modern Mom, if we continue to feed the whims and fancies of our children, we are allowing their aggression to grow. Parents need to understand that exposing a child to the rest of the world is in the best of their interest, instead of leaving them at home with their gadgets. Instead of getting a child addicted to electronic gadgets and other fancy technologies, we as parents must ensure that our children are exposed to activities which help promote proper emotional, physical and mental development.

If you have just introduced your child to a new gadget, moderate its use by your child. Instead

introduce your child to new habits such as playing outdoor games with children his age, reading informative books thereby inculcating good reading habits and doing your own research on educational toys for his development.

DAMAGED EYESIGHT

Excessive exposure of the eyes to the phone or computer screens leads to the eyes getting strained. Good eyesight depends on staring at things at different distances. Children of any age group who are addicted to their phones or computer screens are the ones who are more likely to have damaged eyesight than other children.

While it is not recommended to not allow a child at all to use a computer, moderation should be maintained by the parents if they allow their child to find information on a computer. Over exposed eyes will begin to hurt the child's vision and will hinder the child's vision. One in five kids these days has vision problems because of being glued to the television or the computer non-stop. They won't eat without watching television. They won't sleep without watching their favorite show at night. This needs to stop, and as a modern super-mom, you need to know where to pull the plug, quite literally.

Working on screens can weaken vision in kids if the screen is viewed closely, since it forces the eye's lens to adjust to shorter distances. Double vision or blurred vision, eyes drying up, eye fatigue and eyes turning red are just some of the issues kids complain about to their parents these days. Blue light or the light from the phone and computer screen is more harmful to kids since their pupils are larger and have clearer lenses which allow more of the blue light to reach the retina. Less time spent using devices and more time spent outdoors can help as a solution to less eye trouble.

GADGET TANTRUMS

A new word has been coined quite recently for children who throw a tantrum when their electronic gadgets are taken away from them. As a punishment, if you or anyone (including any authorized person at your child's school) confiscates the electronic gadget belonging to the child, there will be an "ipaddy" moment. Since your child would be addicted and attached to the gadget, they are going to throw quite a nasty tantrum, anything which will let them have their gadget back. If you don't want to be a mother who is called to school in the middle of a busy work day because your child has had an "ipaddy" situation, you need to re-look and assess the amount of time you allow your child to spend with any electronic gadget in your house.

Technology will only grow and there is no stopping it. As a parent, we must learn how to get our children to adapt to life without the use of a fancy electronic device. If however, the damage has already been done, and your child suffers several ipaddy moments, you need to sit your child down and explain the consequences, i.e. the advantages along with the disadvantages. When you supervise your child's gadget addiction habits, the device can help in development at the right age, but introducing a gadget or device at an early age and excessive use of it can lead to a significant delay in a child's learning capabilities as well as affecting his health and general disposition.

While the above points discussed in brief are not meant to scare you, they will help you in controlling your children's gadget addiction. Several research studies have shown that children whose gadget or electronic device habits are not monitored end up spending approximately seven to eight hours staring at their device screen. No wonder then, our country ranks high in the number of obese children and

low grades on average. Traditional play grounds have been found to make children more sociable by enhancing their social skills as well as calmer in their general disposition.

In the internet age, kids do not need any hassles of unpacking a board game. Who wants to clean up once playtime is over? No kid wants to twist a clay doh and model it on something when the same can be done on any electronic device like an iPad. Instant gratification is what kids these days are on the lookout for. Your child is no longer a sweet little walking talking toddler, in today's world, children are now beginning to behave like little adults, and if we don't keep a lookout, we are going to be depriving them of their childhood and its innocence.

Chapter 3: Super-Mom – Taking Charge

No matter how daunting the task seems of taking charge, remember, you are the adult and no matter how smart your child may seem to you, you are still the one laying down the rule for your child to follow. When it comes to technology and raising a child in the internet age, parents are not able to take control over their children and their rising dependence on the internet for almost everything from homework to socializing.

Kids these days seem to be updated on the ever changing technology, and while they can make you feel inadequate while trying to set some rules for gadget usage at home, you could be called the bad guy. As a parent, I will only say this; you do know much more than you think. And you definitely know more than your child. Do not let your child lure you into allowing excess usage of any gadget or device at home.

It is only now that researchers in the education department are beginning to understand how exposing children to technology at an early age can lead to their development being affected as we have read in the previous chapters. Like every other parent, I wanted my child to grow up to be a better adult in the future, and I knew that because of me taking things very lightly and ignoring the symptoms which were right in front of me, I had to take charge of my kids and their addiction to my gadgets at home.

A growing number of software solutions are available which enable parents to keep a tab on their

children's online activities. While you may consider this to be snooping, it isn't. Not when you know your child could be bullied online or is being affected by what websites he visits, especially if he is below 18 years of age. Experts however continue to advise that no application or software can help well than old school parenting techniques. Since we belong to a generation of parents who are raising millennial kids, on a daily basis we battles the pros and cons of the internet and devices which help us connect to the internet. While the use of phones has been banned within school premises, several children with their own phones find it more convenient to use their phone when in school. Two in four young children have experienced online/cyber bullying as per statistics in a report recently released.

Psychology experts have warned parents that children face the peril of being bullied for the way they look, as well as other concerns which need to be noted are privacy issues and relationship issues. Dr. David Fernandez recommends having time-outs and keeping restrictions on smart phones including the usage of Wi-Fi at home. Children often pick role models early in life, and depending on what they see, you need to ensure they don't want to be inspired by some advertisement online on how they can be skinny super models or clicking on any random links which can get them into trouble.

Another word was coined to explain the paranoia parents feel now a days with regard to their children leading most of their lives online rather than be physically present to have a chat with their parents – Juvenoia was coined from the words, Juvenile and Paranoia to describe the fear that parents feel about the internet and the social trends of having fancy gadgets which could have severe negative effects on a child's way of thinking.

If you think of it, as a parent, we are in quite a catch-22 situation. While parents do see the benefits of having the internet around and want their children to use technology, however at the same time we also want to dictate what our children can or cannot use a device for. School counselors have warned

parents that no gadget can replace the bond shared by the parent and their children. However, since parents are so busy in trying to fulfill every wish and command of their children, there is no time left for any family interaction at home.

Psychologist Dr. David observes that with parents busy trying to work and deal with household work, they have no time left for parenting unlike old school parents where the mother was always there for her kids any given time of the day even if she was working. While many parents argue that the offline world is unsafe too, that does not give us reason to allow our children to get full freedom from any restrictions being imposed on them for all their online activities.

If you are still unsure as to how you can take charge as a Super-mom and help lay down the rules, I have mentioned below some of the points which have helped me to keep the gadget addiction under control in my home.

BE FIRM WHILE SETTING PRIORITIES

As your kids keep getting older, they will be under severe peer pressure. Your child might want the latest gadget doing rounds in the market just because a classmate of his got one for his birthday and is declared to be the coolest kid in school. With so many choices available these days, as a parent, you need to understand their requirements. Focus on what it is that your child needs rather than what it is your child wants. Buy a phone which you feel is within your budget and which will make you feel comfortable about your child's security and privacy in the World Wide Web.

When your child is issued their driver's license, you do not buy them a fancy sedan before having them experience a second hand car, do you? It is the similar story with gadgets. Just because your child knows how to use a computer or your smart phone or tablet, does not mean that they get to own one. A basic phone will help you to keep in touch with them and also help reduce any risky behavior. You can even decide a plan for your child's phone if it is absolutely essential that he/she must use one. Several schools have issues notices to parents informing them about the banning of smart phones from being used in school during student class hours. Once you identify your child's needs from his wants, you will find your job as a parent much easier than before.

If your child needs to do some research or look up pictures for their class projects, allow them to use your gadget or electronic device which can help them. But do ensure that they are only using it for educational purposes and not fooling you into using it for socializing online.

YOU'RE IN-CHARGE AS THE SUPER-MOM

While your child may argue that the price of a phone is cheap, do not fall for that argument just yet. As a contributor to the family income, you need to work out your financial condition before making a hasty decision of adding one more phone bill to the ever-growing pile of bills.

Most experts on parenting suggest checking your child's internet activity – especially children below 18 years of age. This allows you to have a family device which can be a computer, laptop or an iPad which can be used by one and all at home and is rooted to your own house.

Avoid feeling pressurized all the time by your child's demands. Don't feel guilty for not having given in to your son's whim of wanting to own an iPhone before he can even work on algebra problems in school. The money you save from buying him a regular working phone can be added to his college savings. In the end, only he will benefit from it.

A dear friend of mine, Joanne, mother of a six year old and a twelve year old, got her eldest child an iPhone for his twelfth birthday. However, while handing him his gift, she also ensure he read and understood the dos and don'ts of owning a fancy device which was to be used responsibly. He was also made aware of the consequence he would have to deal with if he did not follow the rules laid down. When I asked her why she would gift him something this expensive at his age, her reply was simple. She wanted him to learn responsibility and nurture him to grow into a healthy young lad who would know the difference between good and bad as well as learn how not to be ruled by technology.

She also felt that since she did trust her eldest child to be responsible when she was away at work, maybe he could inspire her youngest child to follow in his footsteps. Joanne even made it clear to her child that if any of the rules were breached, she would take the phone away and he would then only be able to borrow it from her for a few minutes. He was made to give her all passwords to any social networking sites including his personal e-mail (Joanne vowed she wouldn't snoop on him) and he needed to answer the phone whenever he was out. Joanne also ensured he did not carry the phone with him to school at all and the phone was switched off and handed over to her every night before his bed-time.

FIND TIME TO CONVERSE

Use the internet and advancing technology as an opportunity for both, you and your child to learn and share about the digital world. Several schools teach children which websites can be useful for them for all their school work. You can visit those sites too or sit with your child and help him research for his homework. Not only will your child be happy that you are helping him out, you will also develop a lovely bond with him and it will last as a memory for your child to cherish in the years to come.

As a super Mom, you need to check if your child is being offensive or is bullying others online. Don't go yelling at them if you do notice something, but talk it out. Inform them no matter what they learn in school, everything that they share online is not always going to be safe and thus, they need to be careful. Your child should also learn to come and tell you if he/she is being bullied online. Let's face it, the online world can be cruel and if you encourage your child to come talk to you, you might just get to know even more about your child as well!

Chapter 4: De-Gadgetizing Your Child

As I had mentioned in a previous chapter, not everything is as easy as picking up a gadget and finding a solution or a remedy to a problem. While this book not only helps you out in raising your child and helping him have a gadget free childhood, I also share with you some of the tips and tricks that have worked for me and my children. As a full-time working parent, it can be difficult to keep monitoring your child all the time. However, if we learn to prioritize our schedules in a manner where it allows us to spend some time with our children, the tips mentioned below will help you develop a wonderful bond with your child. After all, nobody would like to be remembered as a parent who was never there for their child, would they?

Shared below are some gadget-free ways of keeping your child engaged and having fun at the same time while learning how to be independent by themselves too!

1. CRAFTING

If you have a whole room filled with things you have never had time to get rid of, items like bottle caps, empty glass bottles, cardboard, egg cartons, Soda pop bottles etc., all you need to do is look for inspiration in your house. The next thing you know is you will come up with some creative idea and what better way in getting your children involved in it? Visit a store with your kids, and let them pick out their favorite paint colors, gently recommend ideas to them so that they know how else they can work with the items at home. Push them to think about what they can do by repurposing stuff available at home. You will be astonished at how a child's mind works when pushed to think creatively. The good thing about craft is you do not have to spend every dollar in your bank account and you can recycle things in the house.

For e.g.: A hanging flower pot can be made with the help of empty plastic soda pop bottles.

If creativity seems to elude you, log on to the internet and visit sites which can help you with ideas as well as give you instructions on how to go about with the craft project and also provide you with information on what all you would require to complete the project.

Most stationery marts would have tools which can be used by children as well. Don't worry about the mess that's made, after all childhood is about being messy and not perfect, isn't it?

Crafting not only helps to boost the creative cells in your children, you will also be spending some fun time with your child. Look at a project which your child would love and not something where you have to do all the work. This will also give your child the opportunity to learn how to glue things together (go slow with the glue though, you wouldn't want everything being glued together in the house), how to use the scissor etc. Sounds like fun, doesn't it? You do not necessarily have to enroll your child with an art and craft class. However if you do have an older child, it will help him/her to enroll with an art and craft class since it will help in building their socializing skills and learn teamwork when they're young. It will also help inculcate values like sharing their things with others, and who knows you might just be able to help your child make real friends for life, instead of being in front of a gadget all the time.

As a kid myself, going hiking or just a visit to the beach with my parents was the most joyous thing ever! I would plan for the entire day. However, since most of us now live in cities and with soaring rental and hotel prices, it is difficult for families to plan a grand vacation as they find it unaffordable. But it isn't all that difficult. You will surely be able to find a small cottage or an affordable beach trailer to rent out for a weekend. Heading outdoors is becoming obsolete these days and the only exercise kids get is using their fingers on a gadget while playing on an X-box or the laptop. The easiest way to help de-gadgetize your kids is to take them to parks or when the weather permits, teach them how to ride a bike or rollerblade in the park next door.

If you do your research well, you may even be able to convince a friend or a colleague at work to let your rent out their beach house or cabin in the woods for a getaway with the kids. Some holiday resorts even have enclosed surroundings which have the illusion of being outside. So while you relax, your kids can play instead of being indoors all the time and they won't require constant supervision. Visit a place where your child has the option to go outside and play, or go for an overnight camp. Once children get used to the outdoors, you won't find them seated in front of any gadgets when you return from work.

3. MUSIC / READING

Reading and music are two hobbies which have been proved by research to have some fantastic benefits in kids who are exposed to them at a younger age in life. While you may love to read or listen to music or enjoy both of them, reading books to your children that are deemed appropriate for their age will result in some wonderful rewards at school and in life for your child. While you should not force your child to master an instrument only because the neighbor's kid is a maestro, encouraging your child to pick up and learn music instrument will be a fun activity for them. If your child does not show any interest in learning an instrument, do not fret. While not all of us may like to play an instrument, we all sure do share our love for music, don't we? Play the radio at home, or if you have any of your old vinyl's, music C.D's etc., play them on your music system at home. Not only will your child learn to love the various sounds, you will surely not regret developing a good taste for music in your child.

Take your child to a library where there are plenty of options available. What you read as a child may not really interest your own child. Don't force a book or an author on your children. Let them learn to choose a book for themselves. Take them to the children section in a library, or if you prefer online shopping, then you can look up books or speak with your child's class teacher and ask for recommendations on books they feel are suitable enough for you to read to your child or books which your child can learn to read.

4. BRING OUT THE SOUS CHEF IN YOUR CHILD

When kids often say the words every mother detests hearing, “I’m bored.” you know you are going to have to find a remedy for their boredom even though you have tons of work still not checked off your to-do list.

Try to find kid-friendly recipes online, like cupcakes or a pizza. With cupcakes, kids love to get involved and help with frosting the cupcakes and personalize the cupcakes with their favorite toppings. With pizza, kids love rolling out the dough and you won’t believe it but with getting your child to make the pizza, you might just be able to sneak in some of the vegetables your child detests eating otherwise. Children feel proud when they see their creation come out of the oven. Once you allow and teach your child what tools are harmful in the kitchen and a basic training of first-aid (just in case they get a boo-boo), they are going to feel super happy and will be more than pleased to go gloating about how they make a cupcake with their mom at home. If your child’s school allows it, you can even let your child participate in the school kitchen with the knowledge that they know how to handle the food and are aware of what can injure them (like a knife, fork etc..)

5. INDOOR GAMES

Puzzles, board games, Lego etc. are some fun ways of keeping your child entertained and away from gadgets for hours on end. It also helps in tiring out their mind if they are bored and you will be able to focus on what you're doing since they might not need constant supervision with indoor games. However, do pay attention to the age group mentioned on the game box. You don't want a two year old swallowing a puzzle piece meant for a five year old.

Lego helps in boosting their creativity skills and board games help the whole family to bond together. Puzzles can keep children occupied for days, they help in boosting brain activity for your child and your child will learn to find resolutions at an early age.

6. OUTDOOR GAMES

You are probably one of the lucky few if you have space outside your house for you to set up a play area for your children. Set up a basket ball hoop, allow your children to learn how to dribble a ball or kick a ball around when they are young. A little bit of sunlight can do wonders for your child's bones and health!

Or if you have even more space, get a trampoline. Not only will it be fun for your child to jump about, you can join in the fun too. Make a party of it by inviting some of your child's play school friends. It will be an excellent for you and your child to socialize and the best part is there are absolutely no gadgets involved!

7. GARDENING

Being out in the garden and getting everything from their hands, feet, knees and clothes all mucky is a child's favorite attraction. Not only is gardening fun, it makes for a lovely learning and observing experience for the children. Being inquisitive and asking all kinds of questions about the plants from what kind of plants are being grown to what do plants eat and drink etc. If you live in an apartment, you can always learn through various resources online about how to grow a terrace garden or a window garden. You can even turn this into a craft project. Get the child to paint the pots, or water the plants, and watch how your child begins to get responsible about the plant.

You know your child best, so you should be aware of what he or she likes the most. Unfortunately as technology advances, some of us including me are guilty of being glued to our laptops and phones and not paying much attention to what are children try to tell us. So whether it is clay modeling or painting, building blocks and crashing them down, try to get involved and become a part of your child's world. You might just see things much differently from his perspective. Pin up his recent art work on the kitchen board, keep his latest play doh creation in the drawing room, and learn to praise him for the beautiful plants growing outside. Not only will this help build his self-esteem, he will be even more encouraged to participate in such activities in school and who knows, by encouraging your child, you might just end up helping other parents by encouraging their children too!

Conclusion

Every generation has something to add to the evolution of parenting, and all of them only want one thing – the best for their children without having to please them.

Remember, history has a way of repeating itself, and at some point, it does pay to look back in time for guidance which will help your children understand things better for them to be able to raise their own children. Every experience leaves an impact on children.

Technology is a double edged sword. As a modern day super-mom, you need to use technology to raise healthy, happy and well-behaved children. This is more about striking a balance between the battle for supremacy between gadgets and your child. After all it is for your child's safety and well being.

You will find advantages as well in raising a tech-savvy kid, but it need not always mean you need to hand over or buy them fancy gadgets for them to learn. Setting rules is not the only thing you need to do as a parent, you also need to be aware of the latest in technology and be cautious about bullying and any personal data being shared if your gadget is being used by your children.

It is a Pandora's box, and if you are not willing to spend the time to learn about how you can keep your child safe from monsters lurking online, avoid getting your child anywhere close to a gadget or

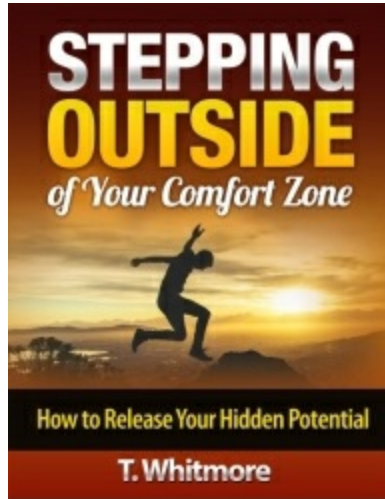
the internet.

As a parent, it is our responsibility to help our child survive the changing times, while we are on the same learning path ourselves.

Good Luck on your turning into a gadget-free super Mom. And always remember, old is gold, but the new is not all that bad too!

Before You Go

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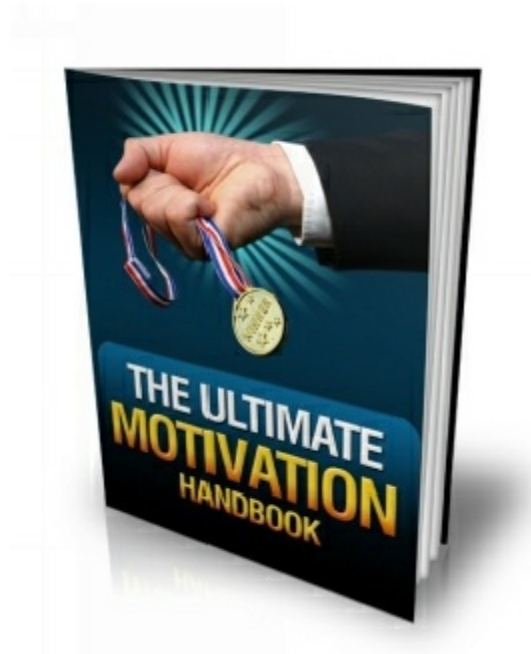
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Thinking Positive Daily
*A Guide to Personal Growth
And Self-Esteem Mastery*

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Introduction

This book is meant to serve as a helpful guide for those people at cross-roads between surviving the past and claiming a whole new approach to life.

You see sometimes even with the most enviable family, a great career, financial freedom and great friends and relatives, without the ability to nurture a positive mindset, you find that most people still continue to live the most unfulfilled and unmotivated lifestyles.

Look around you and especially take a deeper glance at those people in your immediate circles; your friends, relatives and even co-workers. Do they seem somehow stuck regardless of how much bliss they have going on in their lives? Do you find yourself wondering why they accept how things are and move on like all is just fine. You see those hitches you found while analyzing who they really are on the inside, this could be the same outlook you project when they look at you.

A positive approach to life means that you dare to believe in good things during bad times, that you choose to be grateful for what you already have and not keep lamenting on what you still lack. It's about depending on 'you' to bring forth positive actions and feelings; that you know you have the ultimate power to make you happy and content.

In this book, not only are you going to learn how to look at the glass half full rather than half empty, but you will also learn how to accept life's limitations without surrendering to them. So if you know that life is a gift, why should you limit yourself and keep you from maximizing your potential?

Life is too short to live in a shell of negativity and limitations! Continue reading and hopefully this book is able to shine on some enormous insights on your thinking and offer a whole new positive approach to life.

Chapter 1

Developing a positive mental attitude and its benefits

Still stuck in the past?

Did you know that without your due consent, no one can make you inferior? One of the most compelling ways to increase the chances that you'll reap success is breeding a positive mental attitude. This positive approach towards life makes you much happier, and the easiest person you and other people can relate to becomes you.

So you've been through some rough patches in the past, terrible things have happened, you've been shaken and torn but that's in the past. You see you cannot afford to start living your life on automatic pilot. By embracing a positive overall mindset, you are able to change the odds and especially break the chains of emotional slavery.

What is a positive mindset?

This means choosing your reality and how things work out and affect you by maintaining a positive mindset. Ever wondered how some people despite the challenges they go through still manage to remain happy while others keep agonizing over their circumstances?

This is because one of them opted for life and its fullness and because they understand that their thinking today determines not just where they are today but where there will be tomorrow.

The power of positive thinking

Optimistic people are in a better position to handle the changes that are inevitable in life. For

example most people develop severe illnesses as they age and it is those with a positive mindset that are able to face such challenges and go on living.

A positive mindset determines how it is that we deal with loss, pain or disability. Take a look at Nick Vujicic; that guy has literally had to live the most challenging life but has emerged with an inspirational story. Born without limbs, instead of looking down on his disability, he has taken the initiative to become an inspiration by living his life without limits.

The beauty of embracing a positive mental attitude is that you are able to adapt to changes and challenges that confront you and even go an extra mile of serving as an icon of inspiration. Even when the angel of death comes knocking, a person with a positive mental attitude is able to confidently soldier on and instead of leaving behind sad memories, his/her positive vibrations are able to tap on precious memories, laughter and dear reminiscence to be treasured for many, many years.

How to build a positive mindset

If you choose to adapt positive mental attitude as a way of life, it no doubt brings forth constructive changes into your life. While you may not be in the position to change your challenging situation right now with either your job, family or where you live, you can choose to approach life with positivity. This can be achieved by challenging such negative thoughts and improving your overall outlook on life.

So how do you build a positive mindset?

1. Identifying those negative thoughts

To be able to prescribe medication, a doctor must first find the culprit. The first step towards controlling your thoughts is breeding awareness. You can try keeping a journal of the way you perceive different things. This means your work, environment, school, family, parents, friends and

everything else around you. This will help you to pay attention and listen to that inner voice in your head. Awareness is where the healing begins.

2. Using positive affirmations

Words carry so much weight; we use them to build ideas, conversations and sentences in paragraphs. How much positivity do you reaffirm with the words exiting from your mouth? While the words you utter are first shaped by the thoughts that you harbor, the more you utter positive words the more positive you render your thoughts.

Make it a pursuit of wellness to commit to positive thinking by embracing positive language habits. Our choice of words says a lot about our attitude and our thought patterns. When you replace your negative words with positive ones such as “I love myself”, “I am a conqueror”, “I can do it” and such, then you begin tapping on positive vibrations.

3. Focus on the present

Bearing in mind that everyone has problems, this perception comes in handy when practicing a positive mental attitude. Did you know that the things you worry about their happening almost never happen at all? In most cases, even if these things that worry you end up happening, they often don't end up being such mighty problems as you'd have anticipated.

The point is that if you quit worrying about tomorrow and focus on today, you can easily minimize such worries and fears that often breed negative thoughts.

4. Who are your friends?

You know the people that you choose to surround yourself with should be able to rub positive vibrations on you.

It is therefore really important that you make the conscious choice of spending time with those people who spell positivity, are supportive and who energize you.

Remember a drowning victim will not only impact negatively on you, but you can bet he'll take you down with him when his little shaky comes crumbling down.

5. Challenges? No, Talk of opportunities!

A wise person uses the bitter bricks that life throws at him and uses them to lay a firm foundation. Instead of allowing challenges and problems to get the better of you, turn them into open opportunities to make you better.

Remember what happens to you highly depends on your approach. Often, the difference there is between a dismal failure and a successful outcome is just a mild shift with your perception. How we respond to situations, particularly how we respond to challenging situations determines the ultimate outcome.

Choosing to see challenges as opportunities communicates a person with a healthy mark of self-confidence, optimism and openness not to mention an adventurous spirit.

6. Don't compare yourself with others

It's sad how most people waste precious time comparing themselves and their situations with other people. I mean why compare yourself with other people if you know there is not a single person in the world that can do a better job of being you than you can?

Comparing yourself with other people often leads you to become judgmental of you and respectively harboring negative thoughts. In comparison, there can never be a win. In fact, if you must compare yourself, you can try using your past and present situation instead of basing the comparison on others.

Think of the sick in hospital, think of the disabled and many other less unfortunate in the society. Instead of trying so hard to be someone else, start counting your blessings and you'll realize that there is no better person to want to emulate than yourself.

7. Know You are not Perfect

It is true everyone wants to feel in complete control of everything around them. That's a lot more like trying to be a god or goddess. While you are not perfect, it would be timely to stop pursuing perfection and simply accept that the tides will not always sail the way you govern.

Sometimes things will happen unalarmed, sometimes they will get out of control so instead of draining your energy on negative emotions, just accept that today things didn't go as planned and look out to a better dawn.

Chapter 2

Affirmations you can practice to wake up on a positive note daily

Attracting good vibrations

Feeling good about yourself will help you to attract good towards you. You see like when you wake up in the morning feeling so thankful for a new day instead of reminiscing on your problems? Confess things like “I had such a good night sleep”, “I feel great!” or “It’s sure going to be a great day for me”.

It is with every feeling, every thought that we build the energy that vibrates and radiate around us.

Your most dominant vibration be it positivity or negativity attracts quite an equal share of the same from the external environment.

According to the law of attraction, you have the utmost choice to attract what you want and shun away what you don’t want and that only happens when you are in touch with surrounding vibrations.

Respectively, as you choose to consistently encourage positive, uplifting thoughts, your life greatly improves in every aspect. The trick is to opt for such thoughts that feel incredibly nice, concentrate and live them as these are the ones that help attract positive vibrations from the rest of the world.

Positive self affirmations

What are you saying about yourself? Did you know that positive statements and affirmations highly condition the subconscious mind to ultimately help develop a more positive perception of you?

Positive self affirmations are the complete opposite of a self-accusing attitude.

But what are affirmations really?

These are positive thoughts often in first person present tense with references like “me”, “myself”, “I” which when said and repeated over and over to yourself become engraved to the point that they define you. You don’t necessarily have to say them out loud; they can be a whisper, written down or you

could simply allow them to linger in your mind though unspoken.

How to positive affirmations

Let's see, where is it that you get these affirmations from? Affirmations are easy to create and practice. Affirmation should work to help you change for the better. Here's an easy method to start creating positive personal affirmations:-

Identifying those negative beliefs

This is best done in handwriting rather than electronically. Get a pen and paper where you create two columns right and left. On the left column, make a list of all the self-limiting statements that you've been using on yourself. Even better spend a few days listening closely to you.

What negative things are you saying about yourself? While jotting down every negative self-talk that comes to your mind, make sure you've not left out any statement no matter how insignificant it may seem.

Create affirmations from those beliefs

So you already have your list of those negative beliefs, compiling that must have been hard and harsh. The next part isn't about to be any easier as we will now be writing some new statements. While these negative beliefs have surfaced for the longest time possible, you will no doubt encounter discouragement and resistant forces, you'll probably even feel like its weird altogether. On the right side of your paper, write a new affirmation that transforms the negative one stated into a positive.

For example, a statement like "I am hopeless when it comes to love" becomes "True love is about to knock on my door, and am so ready!" Make sure the statements are in present tense and don't forget to use baby steps, even Rome wasn't made in a day.

Start practicing the new affirmations

At this point, your left hand column is already replaced with the positive affirmations, so make sure the negative beliefs get toasted.

With just the positive affirmations at hand, designate a strategic location around the house at an area where you frequent. It could be over your kitchen's sink or above your toilet paper roll, these areas are impossible to miss on a daily basis. This helps you gain limitless access to your affirmations.

However, there is no need to dwell too much on them as they should only serve as an occasional reminder that your thinking is undergoing transformation. Whenever you catch yourself saying or thinking negative beliefs and thoughts, use these affirmations to make a turn around.

Start Living in these affirmations

Like they say, practice makes perfect. Now the most important part of this attitude transformation process is that you get to live the part. Now that you've already started practicing the affirmations, you have started believing in them, you realize how things start to change and for the better.

Eventually, the negative statements will have gradually disappeared from your mind. This is because once you start saying these positive affirmations, you start hearing them, when you start hearing them, you start believing and eventually when you believe, things start changing. In essence, if positive affirmations are going to be realized in you, you will have to be bold enough to begin now.

Affirmations you can embrace daily

In essence, self-acclaimed affirmations tend to be so absent in our lives; in our culture, our environments especially. While they may seem as just simple messages, how they can change your life is impeccably awing.

These affirmations help in not just re-programming your thought patterns but also ultimately changing the way you approach situations and reason out. If you want to be this happy and successful person, you need to embrace a fiercely positive and motivated approach to life.

You need to get rid of those negative, self-defeating beliefs and positively program your subconscious mind. Here is a list of positive affirmations you can incorporate in your life to help make you a better person.

Affirmations when angry

- I choose to forgive myself; I am responsible for my own life.
- I choose to remain calm even when facing challenges.
- I choose to speak my mind and not allow frustrations to build up in me
- I choose to channel my anger to productivity and not self destruction.

Affirmations when afraid

- I refuse to let my courage be shaken by fear
- I choose peace and love instead of fear
- I live life courageously, I have no fear
- The future looks promising and I will be successful

Affirmations when feeling sad

- I choose to be happy under all circumstances.
- I am not allowing self-pity get in the way of my joy
- It is during my greatest solitude that I am most fruitful
- Self-pity is not an option, I choose to be happy

Affirmations when you've lost hope

- I choose to see the good in everything around me
- I refuse to give up; I am more than a conqueror
- I may not clearly understand the situation, but there's going to be a lot of good in the end.
- I am a fighter; no mountain is too high for me.

Chapter 3

Getting rid of negative people and start attracting positivity

Defining the toxic People

These are those ‘friends’, colleagues or relatives who you know does everything to make your life miserable and nothing to help build you. They tend to shun away constructive ideas, opinion and change so they remain stuck in their situations without the insight to see beyond what they are battling.

You see those people who take centre stage in your life, those people that you call your friends, have you stopped to think how it is that they impact on your life? It is true that friends are a precious gift, but the moment one of them turns toxic, then no doubt it is time to let them go.

People can be toxic in so many ways; there are those who will try to belittle your ambitions and those who will try to lead you towards destruction. However negatively someone impacts on you, the time to let them go is now! Know that great people do the complete opposite, they are the ones that make you feel great about yourself and help fuel your dreams and aspirations.

Why it is important to detox your life of negative influence

You see negativity affects not just you but everyone else around you. However, the best thing is that you always have a choice to make. If you make the decision to remain positive and back that up with action, then you start encountering positive people and situations. The people you choose to surround yourself with should be those that instead tap in positivity and growth. Here’s why you need to get rid of toxicity from your life:-

- **It slows you down-** Negative people never have goals or objectives in life. They in turn discourage you from pursuing your dreams. In essence, they slow you down any way they can and before you realize it, you are sailing together with them in a miserable boat of

self-pity and unfilled dreams.

- **They drain your energy-** You see that precious energy that you would have been invested into doing something constructive is instead wasted on negative, backward thinking. This negativity drains your energy so much to the point of creating stress and anxiety.
- **You miss out on great opportunities-** When negative people surround you; the possible chance that positive change will thrive is minimal, in fact very insignificant! Inwardly, their influence in your life holds you back from embracing opportunities towards success.

Getting rid of toxic relatives and friends

Sometimes you realize that the person bringing toxic influence to you holds an irreversible influence in terms of blood ties. It could be your mum, your sibling, your spouse or your child.

First of all, family is supposed to rule as our safe haven every time. It therefore can get really hard to accept the odds when the person bringing us the deepest heartache is someone we already treasure. So in such moments it becomes really hard to just walk away, in fact it feels like the meanest and most terrible thought. But then again while some of our relatives will build us and others toil to break us down, there's got to be that point where we draw the line. So how do you deal with toxicity from blood relatives and close friends?

- a) Sometimes they are so uncaring or agonizing to you on purpose, but still you realize their way of existing forces you to compromise on your happiness and limit yourself.

In this case, it might mean spending less time with such people, loving them from a distance or ideally completely removing you from the equation when it deems unbearable.

- b) There will be those who instead of openly addressing a situation, they tend to make

annoying, subtle gestures directed at you. Their idea is no doubt to get you upset. When it's a family member, try making it clear that you love and respect them, they are entitled to their own opinions and ideas and that you respect.

If they care about you, they will support you and stop with the aggression but if they persist, you might need to create some space. Never should you allow anyone regardless of how closely related you happen to be in terms of blood to subject you to emotional blackmail!

c) You only hear of bullies in school, but did you know that family members can be the biggest bullies? You need to know that with a mind of your own, no one possesses the freedom to assault or push you around. You've therefore got to have the nerve to stand up for yourself and confront these bullying minds. Remember you are your only hope of liberation in this case.

d) Keep yourself fully fueled and refuse to neglect yourself just because those people close to you do. If you find yourself in an unfortunate situation of living with a toxic person, invest quality time to rest and recuperation.

Don't allow their influence to keep you up at night thinking and questioning whether it's you doing things all wrong. They simply have issues, period! So are you going to allow them to succeed in driving you crazy?

If you realize you cannot control what they do or how they react, then make sure to take care of yourself by remaining self centered, living positively and living healthy through regular exercise, mindfulness, proper diet and prayer. Keep them agonizing on how you are able to diffuse all their venom and keep it working out for you so impeccably!

e) In case these toxic people get physical and you've made attempts to reconcile things, then you should already be done taking the unnecessary blows. It seems time to become the curtain raiser in this story of fate and destiny by playing the role of 'hero' in your life.

There is the law that governs humanity and you should love yourself enough to accept that until you allow such people to face the consequences of their actions, then they will only remain as impeding ghosts always in the way of the happy and more fulfilling life you deserve.

f) You can't harbor hateful feelings- You see hating a toxic relative only pulls you down to their very level. An eye for an eye will leave the entire world blind. So regardless of how unforgivable and despicable someone becomes, never allow hate to build up in your heart.

When you start hating someone it becomes you digging two sorry graves, one for the offender and one for you. In essence, the best revenge is when you choose to be the opposite of them by living well, raising your head up high and creating bliss and peace in your life.

g) Sometimes people can change- Funny enough; some people can still be repaired in the long run. You see often even after people become toxic and the trust that existed is broken, it is important to note that with willingness to rise above the situation, there is always hope.

All you need to do is understand that trust rises and falls over and that it takes un-wavered strength to hang on and grow together. So if there is room for dialogue and a willingness to reverse the odds from the two sides involved, then it remains an endeavor worth trying.

h) Sometimes you've got no choice but to really let go- While you cannot be in full control of how people impact on you, you can make the decision to not yield to them. With their actions and opinions constantly invading your heart and you trying to find ways to make things work, it reaches a point when enough becomes enough.

The world is not perfect and you won't be the first to let go of some long-term relationships and bounds. Don't be afraid to let go and do what feels right and what makes you happy.

By the end of the day, life is too short to keep compromising your happiness and growth for people who will never make the effort to meet you half-way the race.

Chapter 4

Letting go of emotional baggage

What is emotional baggage?

This is best defined as a negative everyday expression and approach towards life that holds on to past wrongs, disappointments and trauma. Sometimes the ghosts stem from our childhood, our upbringing or past interactions.

These past feelings and thoughts about the negative things that have happened to you in the past carries so much weight which respectively poses negative effects on your overall behavior and attitude.

Because of this emotional heaviness, you lack the zeal to seize opportunities, appreciate the good things in your life or to tap fully into your God given potential. In essence, emotional baggage limits you from living a fulfilling happy life.

Unpacking your emotional baggage

Carrying emotional baggage is like carrying a heavy load to an unknown destination. As it is, holding onto unresolved emotional feelings inside subjects your body to physical suffering and the more the emotional baggage piles, the worse the body becomes.

You need to realize that your feelings are not who you are and make the choice to rise above them. As alive as is the fear of missing out in life, so is the fear of letting go.

You see the problem is not that you have emotional baggage, but that it has come to a point that it defines you, this makes it an issue in need of immediate action.

Take your time; it calls for baby steps

However, ditching a long-held belief isn't about to be an overnight process, it will take you longer than a week, a month even an year all because it is a life-time process.

The good news however is that, it is possible. However, the challenge lies not in getting immersed in either the pain or the joys but in keeping your heart open and not constricted and barred.

Understanding that it is in the present and not the past that you can experience happiness, love and fulfillment will help deal with the fear of letting go.

While it will be a step by step process, take your time and don't spiral to the next step until you derive satisfaction that the current step is indeed working out for you. Let someone close to you in on this journey as their presence serves as assurance that you are not alone.

How to let go with steps

So is your past impeding so much on your present and possible future it surfaces like a leach that just won't let you take a breather? Having come to terms with the fact that you need deliverance and having understood that you are your own master, here's how to release and cull out emotional baggage:-

1. Make a firm decision to let go

True, you've already come to the reality that you need to let go of your negative emotions, experiences and thoughts from the past, but the decision needs not be dependent on circumstances but infinite.

This is where you say 'enough is enough' to you and make a pact with yourself that no matter what, you are either letting go or letting go!

2. Identify the dirty culprits

You see you can't deal with something if you can't fully identify what it is. Take time to analyze your life from your childhood and other significant interactions growing up. What is

this that has left you wounded, scarred and painfully hurting? What was your contribution in these interactions and what makes it so hard to forget them?

Once you are able to understand how these past relationships and interactions have negatively impacted on you, then you can identify which current issues have potential to make a similar impact and cull them out.

3. What are your current triggers?

One of the greatest reasons that past ghosts keep haunting us in the present is because we continue to tolerate potential triggers.

Something that reminds you of the past and something that has the power to provoke past feelings, memories and reactions needs to be spotted and uprooted.

4. What is your reaction or approach to such triggers?

Looking back on your life, what has been your reaction to such triggers? Like for example if your emotional baggage involves your husband's infidelity, what happens when you feel suspicious or distrustful of him?

When you are feeling neglected, controlled or mistreated by him, what is your immediate reaction? Often you realize that your immediate response is over-reaction, losing your calm and anxiety.

When you are able to identify your reaction to things that trigger your past demons, you are able to make a turn around with them. Remember your attitude is a choice you make. So if you choose to not allow such triggers to define your mood, you help change past outcomes.

5. Get in touch with reality

Even when you are able to discern that your reaction to current situations is tied to the past, the feelings can sometimes be so intense it becomes hard to react any different.

Now it becomes important to identify with your present by facing the open reality. Use your subconscious mind to counter feelings and thoughts that are irrelevant today, that are not a reality today.

Say it's regarding your once unfaithful husband; do you have evidence of your current suspicions that he could be unfaithful? While the answer is definitely no, will you stop allowing inhibiting ghosts determine your future!

6. Start living in the present

Now you can choose how you want to live, react and approach life's situations. Go ahead and create positive affirmations to use every time you feel like the ghosts from your pasts are threatening to surface!

Make positive statements like "I will trust a lot more and not be afraid to live my life to the fullest". When you start claiming good things, positive things, they in turn starts happening.

Search your current life situation and sure you must be able to identify something positive and one that directly contradicts your past experience. Make this the silver lining in this dark cloud and use it to soar.

Finding the good both in your past and present helps reclaim your power where you become no longer the victim but the master of your own destiny.

Chapter 5

Rising above disappointments and heartbreaks

Life is not perfect

Let's face it; life is a battlefield and not a bed of roses. Your attitude and daily approach to life's situation should be a lot more flexible and it should remain definite to anticipate failure at times. This way instead of such situations weighing you down, you will already have an escape plan.

So when life doesn't go the way you planned, how do you react to that? Do you develop a cynical outlook? Do you become absorbed in the misfortunes and set-backs that life mercilessly throws at you? Often you realize that it is every step you take towards a 'golden future' that seems to take you two more steps backwards.

How many people today are guilty of wanting a picture-perfect successful future? A loving husband, enviable kids and a to-die-for career? Sometimes you've wanted to get rich overnight and live the most comfortable life. While forgetting that life is already beautiful even without trying to perfect it or salivating for luxurious living, we forget to actually live.

Being happy just because

You don't become happy in life because things are indeed perfect, you are only happy when you are able to look beyond the imperfections. Sometimes all you need to do is to take a step back in time and re-evaluate your attitude, how is it that you perceive things around you?

Being happy just because means that instead of living from fear, you start living from faith. That instead of dwelling on self-pity, you can start practicing compassion for others. As it is, people are going to hurt you, shake you and try to break you. Where you remain after all the drama is all that

matters.

Again given that disappointments and heartbreaks can really harden your heart against trust to the point of making you question the goodness there is in humanity; know that there will always be a way out. The way out is choosing to be happy just because regardless of all life's challenges. Here are 5 reasons to want to choose happiness:-

- Choosing to enjoy the moment instead of agonize becomes a habit, it becomes character, it defines you.
- Choosing to celebrate instead of mourn highly benefits your future.
- Happiness even from just a simple smile spells improved health.
- Every new day becomes a new opportunity to become better than you were yesterday.
- You start positively impacting on other people's lives.
- You become the master of your own destiny.

Overcoming disappointments and heartbreaks

Regardless of the disappointments, hardships, adversities and pain you may have suffered in the past, there is no reason to beat yourself up. The fact is that disappointments don't discriminate unless you allow them to, heartbreaks shakes you but they don't cripple.

Say you missed out on that promotion; she turned down your marriage proposal, he cheated on you with your best friend or you missed out on that defining auction. It is through tests and challenges, disappointments and heartbreaks that we are able to savor the delicious taste of victory. The most important thing to bear in mind is that getting up after a setback is not an option, it's a definite resolution.

Here's how to keep moving forward even after life has handed you some bitter lemons.

Cut yourself some slack- You see, self-blame is often the reason why you are unable to accept the outcomes in certain life situations and simply move on. Agonizing on what you did or didn't do for things to turn out better is a complete waste of time. Just accept that it happened and move on from here.

Play the role of a spectator- This means that you avoid the drama by stepping away and shifting your attention to more positive things. This helps deal with the hard blow as you have already distanced yourself from the event. You know you might just yell out loud and say "It wasn't me" like the events were simply playing out from a movie script.

Don't make it personal- How about you target alternative explanations to the situation. It doesn't have to be something you did or didn't do; it doesn't have to be you. Look at the situation in a broader perspective and find something else to place the blame on.

Focus on your strengths- These you must have many! Think of what you are really good at, how many other things you've achieved in your life, how many other things have worked out according to your expectations. You see those skills you may have gained in the past, hone them and fight to become a better person.

Positive influence- If things are going pretty rough for you right now, it only becomes worse if you choose the company of bitter, self-centered and negative minds. Think hard about who you would turn to in a desperate situation, on impulse and let this be the person you reach out to. The naysayers, let them do what they do best, live in pessimism.

Chapter 6

Getting back on your feet after a financial setback or job loss

Failure is part of life

Sometimes we are faced with the hardest decisions to make, other times we are faced with the hardest challenges to overcome. Regardless of how many blows we receive in life, we must remain positive knowing that failure is an inevitable price while trying to accomplish something.

At one point in life, we all have experienced unexpected financial disasters. It could be that you lost your job, a medical emergency or uninsured losses. In essence we must understand that it remains impossible to predict your financial journey, financial success is never guaranteed.

The Greatest Successors once failed

Even the most successful investors got to suffer financial challenges from time to time. The point therefore isn't to invent a strategy that keeps you from falling, it's having the drive to pick yourself up and start all over.

The most compelling success stories tags along some mind-blowing hustles and setbacks which were used as foundation to success.

So are you facing financial challenges and setbacks, it feels like you have reached your dead end? Know you are not alone and that there is hope to come out stronger than you started off.

Getting Back on Your Feet

You must have already realized that finding the motivation to rise up from failure is often easier said than done. Having beaten yourself up so often even branding yourself the 'greatest failure of all time',

you will need more than just inspiration to resurface. You are going to need a strategic plan; you are going to need a working plan.

So regardless of what brought upon your financial setback, know that your path to recovery will require relentless dedication and a willingness to re-prosper. Your situation isn't unique, you are not the first to walk this lane and this serves as even more conviction that you too will rise.

Here's a six-step plan to help you recover from a financial setback:-

Accept reality- So things are what they are, stop wallowing in unnecessary despair and accept the odds. It is devastating okay, totally crushing and a complete bummer, okay! The most important thing here now is that it's in the past, it's done. Instead of wasting your energy resisting a futile fact, bounce from this past and start making progressive steps forward.

Take your inventory- How much is lost? Surely, there must be something you can still salvage. Take an inventory of the current situation and come to terms with the resources and the liabilities you have. You are going to need this little information when developing a come-back plan from this catastrophe. You see in financial management, you must understand where you are today to be able to make realist future plans. Ask yourself what assets still remains, how much money you owe, how much income is still available, how much are your expected expenses and what is your credit score as at now? Are there long-term implications such as I.R.S, alimony or health issues? All this needs to comprise your recovery plan.

Define Goals and objectives

Where do you see yourself in the future financially? After knowing where you stand and your targeted destination, now you can easily plot the course there. Make sure your goals are specific with definable end results. Again they should be measurable and attainable so you are able to measure your progress as time unfolds.

You see you cannot afford to set unrealistic goals. Such goals like setting goals of becoming a millionaire within a span of 1 year after filing for bankruptcy aren't viable. Again remember that a goal that holds no deadline remains just a wishful thought. This means that you will need to be smart enough to outline a time or date that the goals are to be met.

The Big Plan

Now with all the armor you will need, the next step is to bridge the gap there is between where you are today and where you wish to be in future. While you are not superhuman, you must respect your emotions along the way because remember no one said it will be an easy road.

Now you will need to figure out the most efficient path that gets you from point A to point B with fewer hassles while not forgetting to ensure that it's rewarding and fun all through.

Take action

You see without consistent action, your goals remains void and null. Action however is what converts your goals into tangible results. This is where you repackage your experience, knowledge and skills towards accomplishing your purpose.

Correction and adjustment

You've already fallen down, picked yourself up and shaken off the dust. You've learnt from past mistakes so it's quite unlikely there will be a repeat of the same. While a wise person knows that perfection is impossible, he knows too that correction is desirable and timely.

Often, you realize that your first plan isn't always your best plan so don't even waste your effort trying to stick to plan A to the latter. Adjusting your approach along the way helps achieve your goals more efficiently and effectively.

Chapter 7

Fun activities to help boost and get you back on track

Relaxation and Fun

It is true that positive thinking in itself won't cure cancer or help reduce your weight. However, positive thinking makes it easier to reduce stress, better manage your life and take care of you.

Making time to get you engaged in enjoyable activities, reason being that they are relaxing or because they are fun and absorbing is really important. While it's easy to get buried in life's challenges or get overly focused on work, most people tend to overlook the need for fun and relaxation along the way.

Fun and positive thinking

Being gloomy all the time is not a healthy approach. Like they say "Too much work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". You therefore need to understand that to boost your positive thinking; you need to make time to unwind, letting go of your worries and cares.

Engaging in something fun and relaxing is a key aspect in helping cultivate not just positivity but also resilience, stamina and energy; a combination you are going to need when you are facing challenges or setbacks in life.

Fun and Relaxing activities to try

Making the choice to engage yourself in fun and relaxing activities gets you openly claiming that "Life

is good”. Why? It is because you are finding something enjoyable to look forward to and this helps replace negative motives with positive ones.

While some fun and relaxation options that works for someone else may not necessarily work out for you, you will need to find that something that gets your happiness flowing.

Regardless of what this activity is, it doesn’t really matter much as long as it is able to enhance positive results overall for both your body and mind.

Here are fun and relaxation activities you can embrace to help boost your vitality:-

Meditation

This is a relaxation and fun technique that offers a soothing effect that inherently brings awareness and relaxation. As an easy activity that requires only a few minutes of your time, you should know that people who constantly engage in meditation display more positive emotions not to mention are able to lead a purposeful life.

Writing

You don’t know how magical a pen and paper and the comfort of your couch can get when it comes to unwinding. You know those positive experiences you’ve had, why not take time to write about them.

Let go and just get immersed in the moment. Writing on positive experiences helps override any possible negative thinking and also acts as a reminder that there is still so much good in this world.

Listen to music

Amidst all those challenges and setbacks in life, dare to look back and get nostalgic with archived music. You must have heard the statement that music is food for the soul too often you already believe it.

Studies have shown that not only is music able to prompt brain changes linked to our emotions but it also abstract decision making. While everyone has their own set of music, make time to indulge in a good listen once in a while.

Exercise

The revitalizing and relaxation benefits that exercise accords are hard to ignore. In respect to a more positive attitude, exercise helps boost your energy while amazingly improving your mood too. So, at times when you feel in need of emotional uplifting, why not take a walk or hit the gym?

Charity work

Being in a position to help someone in need helps bring out the best in you. It could be a friend, relative, neighbor or a complete stranger that needs help.

Again, volunteering to work in a retirement or children's home brings forth a new approach to life. Instead of sulking in your misery, you are able to find more than a 1000 reasons to smile and keep going regardless of the blows that life throws at you.

Other ways to relax and have fun includes:-

- Taking a hike
- Getting a good massage treatment
- Working on a puzzle
- Watching inspirational documentaries
- Cooking – Trying out new recipes
- Engaging in intimacy (safe) with your partner

Chapter 8

Why laughing remains the best medicine

A laugh goes a long way

Have you ever heard of someone who went to the doctor seeking treatment for stress and the doctor prescribed more laughter? Well, you better believe it!

There is no telling how far a laugh can go, from bringing people closer together to establishing amazing connections. Everything can take a complete turnaround from just a slight giggle or guffaw.

A heated argument or chilly unfamiliarity can be easily diffused by a hearty, deep laugh. So are you feeling completely run down, why not try laughing a lot more than you did before?

A Medical Approach

The laughter therapy details that you are able to change psychologically when you laugh. Through laughter, you are able to stretch muscles throughout your body, face not to mention that your pulse and blood pressure goes up. Laughter can serve as a mild work out and offers some advantages that a physical workout brings.

While laughter is also said to help burn out calories, it doesn't mean that you ditch your diet plan or stop exercising. It is a combination of laughter and relentless efforts to be better including exercise that counts.

Laughter as your best medicine

Someone is asking out loud how come laughter is said to be the best medicine. That is no doubt understandable but, are you ready to listen to facts on laughter and positive living?

Laughter is first associated with comic relief and it's impossible to not have tapped into the mood-boosting benefits of a good laugh at one point in life. While humor is infectious, roaring laughter is a lot more contagious than a snuffle, cough or sneeze.

Laughter if shared especially increases intimacy and happiness and helps bind people together. The best part in regard to benefits brought upon by laughter is that it is free of charge.

Physical health benefits of laughter

- Laughter helps relax your muscles
- Laughter also boosts your immune system
- It goes a long way to help boost your immunity
- Helps prevent heart disease
- Lowers the stress hormones

Mental health benefits of laughter

- Adds zest and oomph to life
- Improves your overall mood
- Works amazingly to enhance resilience
- Helps ease fear and anxiety

Social benefits of laughter

- Helps strengthen relationships
- Helps attract good vibrations from others

- Laughter enhances team work and cooperation
- Laughter works well in diffusing conflicts and disagreements

How to bring more laughter and humor into your life

Sure you've experienced the joy of playing with a furry friend or a pet at one point in your life.

Laughter is an open gift, so natural and inborn. Have you never wondered how infants begin to smile right from the moment they come into this world?

Even though you never got the chance to grow up in a household where laughter surfaced, you must have learnt the joy of laughter at a later age. Eventually, you are able to naturally incorporate laughter in everything else that you do. However, in case it gets challenging, here's how to go about it:-

Smile- Whenever you spot something even mildly pleasing, take the rare chance and smile!

Counting your blessings- They must be a handful! Considering the good things happening around you distance you from negative thoughts.

Move towards laughter and humor- Often times, people are happy to share something humorous no matter how ancient for the very reason that it gives them a chance to laugh again. When you hear laughter, seek to know what's that funny reason as to why the laughter and indulge yourself.

Spending time with funny people- There are those people that laugh easily sometimes at themselves, other times at life's absurdities. While their playful view of laughter can be contagious, surround yourself with such people.

Cultivate humor- No; you don't have to be Mr. Bean to be able to crack a joke. Cultivating a joke can be as easy as seeking to find out funny things that have happened around other people, and there, you can easily find something to laugh about.

Chapter 9

The power of Exercise towards clearing and renewing your mind

The Inevitable Hassles

You see there are those days that you simply find yourself going off-course. The workload is unbearable with calls and emails streaming in, with constant interruptions disrupting your actions and your thought process, the pace can deem frenetic.

With the speed you are moving at, you are bound to feel sloppy and unproductive leaving you edgy and stressed out. Many are the times you'll end up feeling like you missed out on something, like you've somehow lost touch with a certain part of your life.

You know like you go shopping for everything you have in the house only to realize that you've gone a little bit over the top with your budget when you get to your house. This frenzy shouldn't be left to escalate so much to the point that the only thing you do when you get home is yelling at the dog and snapping at your kids. It is therefore important to find a way to stay under control during such frantic moments,

Mind De-clutter

If you've gotten familiar with computer terminologies, then you must have heard of Random Access Memory (RAM). This is the storage in a computer that determines the processing capacity of a computer. It so happens that the more applications your computer runs the more RAM it utilizes and the slower it gets. Surprisingly, the same case applies to your brain. Well, have you ever heard of brain de-cluttering? This means clearing your mind of all the 'garbage' that inhibits your peace and laxity. In addition to your daily responsibilities, you still have to face the demands of pending

errands, upcoming holidays, and unbearable moods with your boss not to mention having to cope with negative thoughts building up from life's frustrations.

With so much that needs your attention, it is only normal for your mind to go into overdrive with all the worries and endless commitments. Regardless of life's hardships, one thing that remains constant is that life goes on. The best give you can give you is taking quality time to clear your mind. You neither has to spend so much time on this as just 10 minutes a day are enough to help reboot your brain and recharge your energy.

You see when you decide to stop worrying, ruminating and planning too much and simply empty all that suffocation baggage from your mind; then you begin to live. It is now that you realize how much you've allowed yourself to live in limitation, it is now that you are able to prove yourself as much wiser than your problems.

Positive thinking, positive attitude, positive actions, positive resolutions, positive living! Each one of these goes hand in hand with the other.

Exercise and Relaxation

Apart from meditation and writing, physical activity is another incredible way to help clear your mind and reclaim your energy. True you might figure that having been running up and down in the office and around the house is already enough to get your blood pumping.

However, without forgetting that such work and house routines are the main culprits as to why you are feeling beat, it would be senseless to consider any form of walking within these parameters as healthy.

Separating yourself from the causative action and away from the immediate chaos helps your mind tune into a new environment. Exercise comes in uncontested as one of the most defining ways to help clear your mind.

Look at it this way; how comes you tend to think so much better when you exercise or take a walk?

You see not only does exercise enhance your cognition due to improved blood flow, research also shows that the critical part of the brain involved with the learning and memory is most active during exercise.

Again, exercise has repeatedly been cited to be a cure for inexhaustible health conditions today ranging from diabetes, depression, Alzheimer's disease, memory loss, blood pressure and more.

Respectively, when it comes to sleeping better, exercise works incredibly amazing on your brain to facilitate good sleep so you can now say goodbye to sleepless nights when you engage in exercise and physical activity.

What kind of exercise?

Now you already know that you don't have to wait for those feel-good feelings to come by accident as you can bring them to life by exercising. It doesn't have to be just the physical; you can also try mind exercises too. Here are exercises both mind-oriented and physical that you can incorporate in your day to day schedule to garner an overall healthy and positive mindset:-

Mind Exercises

- **Meditation** -This can be termed as a brain exercise that works by calming the nerves. Through meditation, you are able to focus on a single thing and with practice; you end up being able to pull your thoughts back every time they start to wander off.
- **Cooking lessons**- The decision to learn how to cook a foreign cuisine works incredibly fine. You see cooking uses a number of senses including smell, sight, touch and taste which are a great boost for the brain to maintain healthy functionality.
- **Music**- This simply says it all. You could try taking music lessons on a particular musical instrument. A piano has such a relaxing and mind blowing impact not to mention that being able to make music solely from your brain is a great way to relax and unwind.

- **Breathing exercises-** Breathing falls a lot more on meditation but on its own, the ability to master individual breathing techniques brings forth open-minded clarity that tags along transcendence.

Physical Exercises

- **Walking-** This is one of the safest and easiest physical exercise that anyone can try. A 30 minute's walk a day helps boost stamina while also lowering blood pressure, heart disease and diabetes risks.
- **Running-** This exercise while adhered to in moderation helps boost your heart rate and improve your bone health. Today there are many open arenas to try out this sport and if done as part of a group or with a friend, the derived results are exemplary.
- **Swimming-** This is a low-cost workout that helps pamper the whole body while improving flexibility too. However, don't forget to use sunscreen if swimming outdoors.
- **Dancing-** Another readily available type of exercise to consider. Dancing to such music trends as Jazz, Hip-hop and Latin American music can be a great way to exercise not to mention are incredibly fun too.

Chapter 10

Spiritual nourishment for a positive attitude

Daily discipline

Ideally, life goes more smoothly and is more fulfilling when we embrace a positive mindset. How great would it be if you would make it your unaltered initiative that before going to sleep you get to consider what was right and wrong on that day and use this to improve yourself?

On this note, you realize that the decision to elevate your mind remains definite. One of the ways you can achieve this mind elevation target is appropriating for emotional, mental, physical and spiritual needs on a daily basis.

Such small actions you overlook daily are the ones that greatly impact on your health, productivity and happiness. The commitment to nourish these critical domains in your life could lead to you to finding purpose and passion in life while making you a better person overall.

Here are five major disciplines which if incorporated in your day-to-day activities will help highly elevate your state of mind:-

1. **Practice gratitude-** Nothing compels positivity better than a grateful soul. Make it a habit to write a gratitude list each passing day. This not only helps boost positive thinking but also helps look forward to better days ahead.
2. **Keep yourself active-** Ideally, if you want to remain at your best, exercise cannot be a luxury. Not only does it help nourish your cognition but it also helps slow cellular aging too. Knowing how much further exercise can impact on your overall wellness makes it a daily disciplinary call of action.

3. **Eating healthy-** Lest we forget that what we eat is what we become. Nurturing your body through healthy eating helps nurture your life too. This ensures that you bask in vitality and energy in abundance. Again a healthy body posture also boosts your overall self-esteem and confidence respectively welcoming positivity and bliss into your life.
4. **Embrace integrity-** This means you choose to live in alignment with good morals, values and character. Practicing integrity living ensures that by the end of the day, you are able to trust and respect people not forgetting boost your overall self-esteem. Everything else that follows only spells positivity and good living!
5. **Spiritual nourishment-** We all need to have spiritual nurturing to be able to remain inspired and resilient. Take some time therefore on a daily basis to nourish your spirit. This may be through prayer, meditation, yoga or through any other means that tallies with your spiritual belief.

Being thankful at all times

Sure you've heard this phrase a lot especially from the spiritual books. That you should be grateful for the simplest things, no matter how insignificant they may seem. You shouldn't wait for life to indulge you in practical lessons to start appreciating life.

If you are to keep yourself happy, you need to start doing what is right for your spirit. Start by assessing your relationships, career and spirituality and pinpoint where you could be feeling dissatisfied and why. Follow that up with working on what needs to be done to regain balance and facilitate the motivation needed by you to make changes. This will help nourish those domains that are starved for attention while fostering the overall personal environment necessary for your life to thrive.

How do you feed your spirit?

Doing what you love

It would definitely be great to have a career that is simply aligned with your passion and ultimate goals. While we can't always have this satisfaction, it is important to pursue a career that leaves you in a happier mood even though not necessarily perfect!

That means if you are unhappy with your job, don't wait for that to bring you at a battle field with negative emotions. Instead, do some soul searching and know what it is that appeals to you with no limitations then make every effort to pursue that vision wholeheartedly.

Prayer

Pray and not just for you but for someone else too. You see prayer means seeking guidance and favor from the supernatural God, the one that is above all in majesty and power. Surrendering your entire self to God and letting known your needs and supplications, helps unburden your soul and recharge your body.

The aspect of believing also goes a long way because as the Bible says, if we pray and believe then it's done! The beauty there is in prayer is that we are able to let go of emotional burdens and find new strength to start all over. Prayer remains a key aspect in spiritual nourishment.

Practicing Appreciation

Many are the times that something good happens in life and we end up perceiving it as norm. In fact, many are the times that we miss the chance to be grateful for the good things in life and instead find ourselves agonizing in the negatives and disappointing part of life. However, if you learn to see life as a gift, then you will learn to appreciate those simple things like having a roof over your head or a plate of food on your table.

The power of intuition

Ever heard someone confess of a wary feeling just before something bad happened? Many are the times that we dismiss our intuition and interpret it as simple fear or anxiety. Needless to say, being able to listen and act on your intuition helps you avoid unnecessary and unpleasant hassles.

That means if something doesn't feel right to you, make it an ultimatum to avoid it regardless of how much others advocate for it. Remember your life is just yours to live and the responsibilities from your actions will never be shared!

Chapter 11

Positive thinking and your self esteem

Working on your Self Image

What does your outlook say about you? Does it outline someone who knows their self-worth? Someone who walks with their head held up high? Someone who isn't afraid to explore their options? Someone who is not afraid of failure but is rather afraid of not trying? You must know that self worth isn't self-absorption; it is rather relentless self-respect.

Self confidence is vital and is applicable in almost every aspect in all our lives. Sadly, most people still struggle so much to nail it and this greatly inhibits their success. You see when you have confidence; you tend to inspire the same in others.

However, if you are going to accomplish a positive self-image, it will have to start by pursuing positive affirmations about you. So again, what are you really saying about yourself? Are you branding yourself as incompetent, shy and a slow learner? Well, that is exactly what you become. Remember that you tend to reap what you sow!

Never put yourself down

There will always be those self-accusing voices in your head. Those that say you are not good enough, that you don't fit in and that you are destined to fail. However, how your life turns out is not dependent on these negative accusations; it is dependent on what your subconscious mind says about you.

In the light of day, when you are thinking sane and are saying things out loud, listen carefully to what

you are saying. Make sure that every word you are firmly upholding is a diamond that shines over all those accusing voices in your head. Learn to engage yourself in positive self-dialogue.

Remind yourself everyday of the potential and integrity you possess. If you make it a point to feed on a positive mental diet, then your character and personality sync in positive vibrations too.

Whenever you hit the road, make sure to walk with your head held up high. Not with a conceited attitude though but with self-pride that comes from knowing your worth.

Confidence from positive thinking

Often, it is such negative thoughts and negative self affirmations that cripple your self confidence. No one is to say how long it will take you to reclaim back your self-esteem but what remains constant, is that the journey towards that achievement must start now!

There are many ways to change self-criticism and negative thoughts. However, focusing on all of them at once may deem harsh and overwhelming.

The best approach therefore is to tackle them one at a time, working on each individually and assessing the outcomes regularly. As they say, practice makes perfect so make it a habit to observe regular practice through thought replacement.

Where you'd be inclined to make a negative statement or self-affirmation, replace the same with a positive ultimatum. Make sure to mean what you say, make sure to own up to every counter statement you use on your negative thinking.

Self Confidence is a Necessity

Self confidence comes in handy especially in most potentially difficulty situations such as making a speech, asking someone out on a date, playing a competitive sport, socializing on unfamiliar grounds or speaking up in a crowd.

The good news is that by thinking realistically about a certain situation, regarding you on a positive

light and using simple anxiety management techniques can help boost your confidence.

Confidence is often a blend of both self-esteem and self-efficacy. Self-esteem is more related to holding a belief that we are good enough and deserving to live a happy life. Self-efficacy on the other hand is the internal belief, or sense that we are able to accomplish various goals and tasks we face in our lives.

Each one of these goes with the other. Someone who has self-confidence thinks positively about the present and the future while on the other hand someone who lacks confidence carries a negative perspective in regard to his / her potential and future hopes and dreams.

Tips on improving your self-esteem

Luckily, while you may not possess that admirable self-confidence that leaves you assured of tomorrow, you can always improve on it. Here are tips that you can use to help boost your overall self-confidence:-

1. Stop listening to your inner critic, in fact, stand up to this inner voice gagging up any destructive thoughts.
2. Motivate yourself positively. This means when that inner voice screams just how sloppy you are, counter that accusation with an affirmative action that spells how meticulous you are.
3. Learn to self-appreciate yourself. There's sure got to be something about you to be proud of. Like how you are may be able to make people laugh, how thoughtful you can be or how well you are able to impact on other people. These positive assurances help

neutralize negative mood and in the long-run works towards building self-esteem.

4. Write your attributes down. By the end of the day, take time to reflect on you and outline those things that makes you appreciate you. The best thing about writing down these attributes is that even after weeks have passed, you can read them again and again to the point they become affirmed.
5. Doing the right thing greatly help raise your self esteem. An action as simple as getting up from your comfort zone at the couch and hitting the gym or choosing to understand a certain situation other than being judgmental is a plus.
6. Quit trying to be perfect, no one has ever been! Perfectionism is a great culprit of low self-esteem. It can paralyze your ability to live life to the fullest. The procrastination you have leaves you afraid of failing, of not living up to your set standards and this makes your self-esteem sink with quite a pace.
7. Accept that mistakes and failure are part of live. That along the way you will stumble and fall and that it's normal, that it's okay. The secret is to ensure that you remain your own best friend through thick and thin.
8. Be kind to others. How you treat others is often how you treat yourself and how they possibly treat you in return. If you practice more patience and kindness with others, this becomes a bold realization of positivity and in return you reap the same in double portions.

Chapter 12

Passing on positive vibes to others

Our Daily Interactions

On a daily basis, we interact with different people. Some impacts positively on us while others negatively. Our concern however is how to tap into positivity. You see positive vibes can easily be picked up from those around us, the immediate environment and even from animals.

However, you need emotional quotient to be able to grasp these vibes and inherently absorb them. EQ (Emotional quotient) is thereby your ability to process emotional details most especially those involving assimilation, understanding and perception.

Have you ever met someone whom though a complete stranger at the moment, deep down you cannot deny the fact that you already do like them? That they being in your life add cheer, you like their company so much and you keep looking forward to hanging out with them?

Training Your Mind to Recognize Good Vibes

These people who appeal to you just by mere intuition, these are the people who make you smile regardless, they add zeal to your life, they are the ones who emit positive vibes.

Here's how you can train your mind to recognize these good vibrations from other people:-

1. **A genuine smile-** From just looking at a genuine smile from someone, you'll be able to tap on the same and ultimately fill your heart with happiness.
2. **Eye contact-** When a person smiles at you, make eye contact with them. Eyes are able to emit respective vibes whether positive or negative. Depending on your EQ, you will be

able to define the perceived vibrations.

3. **The tone of the voice** –You should know that this carries a vibe too so listen carefully to how they speak and the tone they use.
4. **Body language** -While listening to their words and paying close attention to even their body language, you'll be able to pick up the vibes, the positive ones.

Positive Vibes vs. Negative Vibes

The first thing you need to understand is that you have a choice every time. Whether to be at peace with yourself or to be in resistance is your choice.

Coherently, you tend to attract positive energy when you are at peace and create negative vibes when in resistance. While it's a just a simple choice, most people still choose to sail in negativity.

The truth is that, regardless of how many setbacks and challenges we face, how we perceive them is what determines our respective attitude. It is not your boss, the traffic, parents or colleagues but your very perception that creates negative energy and stress.

While circumstances are neutral, you tend to generate positive vibes if your inner self is in congruence instead of being resistive.

How to Attract Positive Energy

Remember that we are magnets. Every time we emit positive energy in terms of feelings, vibrations and thoughts, we attract more positivity to us.

Respectively, when we dwell in the negatives, we attract negatives that work awfully by sapping our strength and energy in the process too.

If you really want to attract wellness, vitality and health to yourself, you must stop circulating toxic, thoughts and feelings.

Here are 8 ways in which you can attract positive energy into your life:-

1. **Choose to start your day with meditation-** The art of meditation helps you create a sound awareness with your surroundings.

All you need to do is just relax and allow yourself to feel your consciousness in the midst of emotions and thoughts. Meditation always has such impacting power in helping create positive vibes all day long.
2. **Love yourself enough-** This means that despite your flaws, you learn to love and accept the person you are and keep reminding yourself of those great qualities you possess.
3. **Forgive your past failures and disappointments** – The person you were yesterday can only make you a better person today. You will therefore need to stop engaging in guilt and self blame from past happenings. Decide that today is the first day of the rest of your blissful life and revel in it.
4. **Stop controlling others** – Know you will never be at peace if you remain self-consumed and selfish. You need to let go of your insatiable need to control. Every time you try to control a life's situation, you end up feeling frustrated respectively generating negative emotions.

If life is more like a raging fire in itself, what purpose does it serve to struggle putting it off? Instead, find ways to let go and allow yourself to surface. This way you will not only attract

the gracious incentives of life but you will also attract and retain positive energy.

5. **Envision a Peaceful life-** While your mind might already be addicted to negative thinking, you will need unmonitored motivation to break out and start attracting positive energy.

Stay alert and conscious and you'll witness your mind churning out fearful emotions, stress and anxiety. You will be surprised how intensely positive vibrations will flow.

6. **Tomorrow isn't promised** – You will need to stop worrying about the future because like they say, tomorrow isn't promised, not for anyone! You achieve absolutely nothing by worrying; in fact, your worrying becomes a complete waste of precious time.

Just incorporate practical planning and leave the rest to fate and destiny because no matter how much you try to fight, whatever that has to happen will happen. When you stop worrying you cull out negative emotions and leave room for positive vibes to thrive.

7. **Laughter is food for the soul-** Don't just laugh, keep laughing and don't stop! Indulge in activities that provoke humor such as watching funny movies or sharing jokes. This way, you will be laughing your way back to healthy living by shunning negative thoughts and embracing positive vibes.

8. **Bask in the wonders of nature-** You see nature has a way of awakening such positive vibrations you never knew existed. Sit down for a moment and envision yourself watching the sunset, sitting by the ocean or hiking in nature.

Can you already feel the peace and assurance that comes from such moments? Taking time to get immersed into the wonders of nature helps quiet your mind and body. This way not only do you get to tap into positive vibes; you also find a way to connect with a deeper part of yourself you never had the chance to explore before.

Conclusion

Thank you so much for downloading this book.

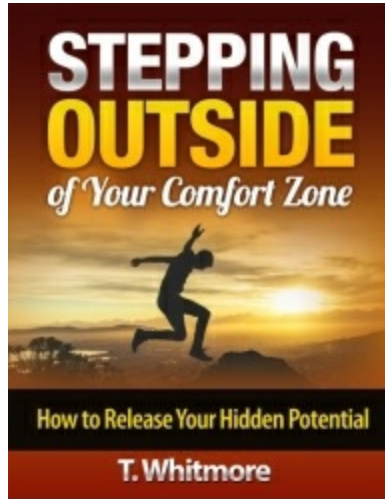
I hope the content herein has managed to serve as enlightenment towards positive thinking. I hope through the tips and in-depth information provided in this book, you will manage to garner a more positive approach to life.

Remember there is nothing as compelling as being able to positively impact on another. On that note, if indeed the book has been helpful to you, please do not forget to extend the bliss. It would be sad if someone close to you missed the chance to benefit from the content in this book as much as you have.

Thanks again and good luck in everything!

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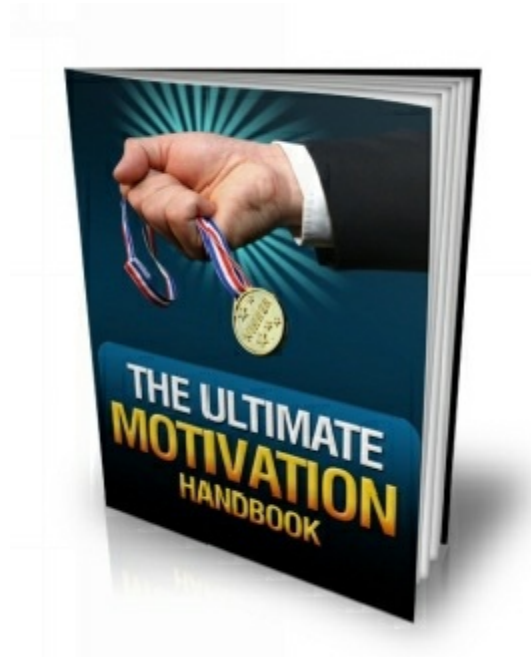
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Embracing the Resistance
*How Adversity Builds
Character and Wisdom*

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Motivation is behind the success of every individual. It is what pushes us to excel beyond our personal boundaries in order to reach our dreams and aspirations. Without it, a person lacks the attitude to hope in a failure and to persevere in a setback.

The Ultimate Motivation Handbook is the key to overcome the barriers of your success. The success of every goal that you set depends on your state of motivation. This book will show you how to maintain focus, break through barriers, and meet each goal you set for yourself!

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Introduction

This book is meant to serve as a guide to overcoming tribulations in life by engaging resilience, determination and courage.

Life remains a journey to an unknown destination. The path is never clear enough, there are never enough clues of what lies ahead, there is no telling what tomorrow holds. To expect a smooth sail in life, no hitches, no pain means rejecting life itself. Because let's face it, problems large or small, are part of life.

There wouldn't be laughter without sorrow, neither would there be draught without famine. In essence, there's always got to be the other side of the coin. The aftermath is not determined by how clever, how well-up in terms of finances or how lucky we are; we will still no doubt encounter struggles, sorrow, hardships and pain.

Given the choice to make, no one would consciously choose to go through woes and suffering. No one would boldly choose death given the choice and if they must, they will still die anticipating someone walks in and reverses the odds. This is because life is precious and amidst all the inevitable setbacks, life must go on!

Again adversity cannot be all miserable, we need to see beyond the blood and sweat, beyond the wounds and heartbreaks, beyond the tears and agony and see the light. They say there is always light at the end of the tunnel. We should therefore learn to pursue the good in the bad, the beauty in the ugly.

Truth be told, you will never really know just how strong and adamant you are unless adversity strikes. Then you learn courage, you build resilience, you learn to persevere, you build character.

Continue reading and it remains my hope that the content here-in is not only able to help you overcome bounds and limitations in life but that it gets you yelling **“Thank God for Adversity!”** is my greatest hope.

Chapter 1

Learning from Your Mistakes – Changes That Needs to be Made

It Starts with Admitting

For many people, the limiting need to be perfect often makes them feel inferior and this becomes a ghost that haunts future achievements. Trying to be a perfectionist bring increased stress and hinders performance. Respectively, embracing your imperfect nature helps see your relationships, personal experiences, emotions and ideas in a less complex view.

Because you know you are not perfect, you are able to come into terms with the fact that you are bound to make mistakes. This way when you screw up, it doesn't catch you off guard that you ought to take responsibility. Most people however will not easily admit they made a mistake, but you need to understand that it is a crucial step in learning and improving yourself.

Admitting to a mistake means refusing to use other people as scape-goats to avoid responsibility but rather courageously owning up to every single one of them. Blaming others distances you from possible learning, keeps you from possible growth!

What we learn from our mistakes

Like they say to err is human and life is full of valuable lessons. So you made a mistake, you are not

the first neither are you the last. It is never easy when someone says “embrace your mistakes”. In fact, it’s not easy to view your mistakes as precious gifts, as gems that they are.

The most important lesson is never allowing your past to dictate your future.

Screwing up will tease you, torment you, test you but ultimately teach you things about you that you never knew. Mistakes make you uniquely you and this is how:-

Mistakes teach us unconditional self-love- Even in the midst of such flaws, being able to laugh at your mistakes becomes self liberating. That you made a mistake means you are not perfect; you never were perfect because you are a work in progress.

Taking away condemnation and judgment helps turn self-loath into self-love. The determination to fix the mistake, the responsibility pursued, the willingness to be better, it can only provoke love for self.

Mistakes brings certainty in what we really want- A mistake becomes the complete contrast of what we really want, desire and consider as success. So you made a mistake okay, this means you did something you shouldn’t have.

There’s got to be that thing that you should have done instead, that now becomes your focus. Fixing this mistake means doing things right, it means stepping into your potential where success now becomes a reality.

Mistakes teaches us to face our fears- Sometimes you realize that even your best idea efforts just comes crumbing down. So you know that success can only be anticipated and is not guaranteed.

When our best efforts fail, we admit that we are stuck; we admit we failed and this takes us directly to

the zenith of our fears. Dealing with the mistakes we made will mean facing possible fears by admitting we need help.

Through mistakes you learn what works and what doesn't- It is not the end of your decision making process just because a mistake happened. It is inevitable the fact that more defining decisions awaits your conscious delegation.

That you made a mistake today becomes a reality check and the most powerful feedback you'd have ever gotten. Through a present mistake, your future decisions will be better informed, propagated differently from those made in the past, those that got you screwing up everything.

Mistakes comes with responsibility and integrity

Often after screwing up, it feels much easier to shift blame. You defend how it was not your fault. However, by looking for our role in the same mistake, taking responsibility makes us determined to do better next time. Again, through our mistakes we are able to understand that even our smallest choices have impact and hence are able to develop integrity in making life's choices. After a mistake made and mended, future happenings are better planned knowing that huge mistakes are often a result of minor errors overlooked over time.

Chapter 2

Using Your Adversity as Strength

Smooth waters? Just hold on that thought.....

Everyone would want to sail in perfection but have you not heard of the saying that says “smooth waters never made skillful sailors”? It becomes therefore not the question of whether a storm will arise, but rather due anticipation of the next storm coming.

Probably the question you should be asking in this case is, what kind of a person you will be when the next storm surfaces? Have you advanced your life skills to counter these no doubt treacherous waters?

You are not a Victim

Many are the times that we focus so much on our failures that we cease to see the good, the achievements. Character is best forged in the blazing flames of adversity. If done right, if maximized for good, suffering can fuel greatness.

Choose rather to see the good in every situation, including the bad situations. Think of a mother who must labor through the birthing process for the sake of a beautiful innocent life inside of her, to be able to enjoy a life together with her baby.

Isn't the labor process agonizing? Is it not a gamble with no surety of the outcomes? To think that you

may lose your baby or lose your life in the process is the last thought that crosses your mind, because your entire being anticipates only the best in the midst of the tough labor.

The same case applies when you are facing a difficult situation. For there to result in a bundle of joy, the labor process must be defining leaving you with a story to tell.

Struggle and Strength

When a chick survives the struggles of the hatching process, this becomes enough assurance that life outside the shell of the egg will also be overcome. No one should relish in a life without struggle, adversity and challenges. This is because these are crucial components of life and respective growth. If you are this person today, it is because you've made it through yesterday's struggles.

It is important that you learn to be conscious about your struggles, be attentive with them, accept them, be thankful for them and see them rather as a valuable opportunity to grow.

The power being broken and shattered brings leaves you stronger, wiser and much better adapted to the inevitable with life. If you are too weak to oversee the end of a battle, you can bet you will never grow beyond the bounds of self-limitations.

Napoleon Hill on the Strongest Oak

Have you ever thought of an Oak tree in the abandoned forest? The large, woody roots of an oak tree emerging through the soil's surface function primarily as anchors for the tree. These roots also have feeder roots sprouting from them. Surprised? Well, now you know that an oak tree has two kinds of roots, the woody and the feeder roots both whose function is to take in oxygen for the tree.

While these roots often continue growing in exposure, this harshly exposes the tree to the inevitable natural and artificial hazard. That sweeping storm, harsh winds, the scorching sun but still, you find that oak tree standing out right there in the middle of all that. Stronger than ever, resilient and sometimes in such amazing awe that beats logic.

Napoleon Hill (1970) “The strongest oak of the forest becomes not the one that is carefully nurtured away from the raging storm and hidden from the scorching sun. Rather, it is one that elongates in the open space compelled to struggle for its very existence against the rains, the winds and the scorching hot sun”

Rising above the odds of failure

Life has never been a bed of roses. It is therefore crucial to anticipate failure at any given time and be bold at it. This way instead of adversity weighing you down, you are already armed with an escape plan.

Let's see, how do you react to a disappointment or setback? Do you become self-absorbed and sulk in misery feeling sorry for yourself or do you dust it off, take a breather and keep going?

There is need to learn to be happy just because, for no reason at all. Not because things are perfect or are going your way but just because you are wise enough to see beyond the imperfections.

Disappointments never discriminate unless you allow them to and about setbacks, they shake you okay, but they can never cripple you!

Chapter 3

Positive Thinking as a Basic Ingredient

What is a positive mindset?

Having a positive mindset means refusing to allow reality and how things work out affect you by maintaining a positive approach to life every time. In life, you'll encounter those people whose life has been a race full of challenges yet they carry that broad smile and are the last lot to agonize over their circumstances.

It is not because the harsh realities never hit them hard, no! The only difference between them and their opposite counterparts is that they chose life and its fullness. They no doubt understand that their thinking today determines not just where they remain today but where they will be tomorrow.

Overnight success?

Truth is, it is easier to remain positive at such times when things are going great in your life. It's very easy to transition from a hard situation to a heartwarming one too. However, the hard part comes in while trying to remain positive and motivated after life decides to challenge you as miserably by knocking you down hard.

That successful entrepreneur relishing in seas of investments and untold net worth also has a story to tell. Sadly when we see successful people we only picture this moment and miss out on the struggle and pain it took them to bring them on a pedestal.

Fact is no one goes through life untested. In fact, every great and astute leader had to overcome such trials and adversities before their present definition emerged. So forget the possibility of overnight success; its possibility only remains a myth that entices lazy bodies.

Positivity and power

It is one thing to understand that adversities in life are meant to be overcome and not simply endured; it's another to have the courage to put those sentiments into action. With the wealth of motivational speakers there is today everywhere you go, it remains evident that people are more stressed and troubled than ever.

Overcoming your adversities requires resilience and endurance. It means carrying a stamina that is able to withstand any storm life sweeps ashore. That you must remain unshakable even in moments of doubts and uncertainty, knowing that it too shall pass.

However, resilience goes hand in hand with a positive mindset too. Your thoughts must be in line with your actions. To be able to get through your trials, you need to change your beliefs and thoughts about the challenges you are facing. Remembering that it's not ideally what happens to you that count, but instead how you respond to what happens to you.

Know that suffering and pain are not meant to derail you but rather to harness you. That also means that you must eliminate self-doubt and fear of the unknown. You can either have faith or fear; else these two cannot sail in the same boat.

What are you really made of?

When all is said and done, what are you really made of? Is it iron or is it charcoal? The moment you are wired through the blazing fires of adversity, when the chips crumble, what lies in the heart of your character? How you decide to roll your dice ultimately determines who ends up laughing. In this case it's just you and your adversities.

Made of iron? Great! That means you are naturally composed so thank heavens for that! The first step is to relax, clear your mind and get yourself to a point where you are in utmost control of your senses and emotions. Get as objective as possible, your life's novel is unfolding, so step back and choose to play the role of the spectator. Quite as if all the drama was instead happening to someone else.

You see having the ability to clearly analyze your adversities through positivity and zeal allows you to see open opportunities to use your adversities for good. So are you going to remain positive in the glare of your doubts and fears or are you going to ruthlessly drag your future success through the muds of negativity?

Building a Positive mindset

Sometimes positivity just blossoms naturally but often it is cultivated. Optimistic people stand better chances when it comes to handling challenges, change and the inevitable with life. While it may not

be possible to change the challenging situation you have today, you can choose to approach it all with positivity. This can therefore easily be achieved by taking the initiative to challenge such negative thoughts when they surface and improving your overall perspective of life.

Here's how to build a positive mindset:-

a) Identify the negative

Breeding awareness is the core ingredient when it comes to controlling your thoughts. How about you try and take inventory of how things around you happen, how you react to them ranging from your work, school, social and family environments. The conscious understanding of your reaction to various stimuli's helps you to pay attention to the inner voice in your subconscious. Know that awareness is the basic foundation for any healing process.

b) Positive affirmations

Did you know that words carry more weight than even actions? We use words to build ideas, conversations and respectively actions in the long-run. So ask yourself this question. How much positivity do you induce with the words you utter?

Considering that words said are initially designed by the thoughts you harbor in your mind, you need then to replace negative words with positive ones to derive positive actions, to succeed!

c) The past is gone

Often we keep agonizing about the mistakes we made in the past, choices we made or didn't make and things we didn't or didn't do.

The past is gone and there isn't much you can do to erase that fact, but there is a lot you can do to reverse the odds in future.

You've been given the chance to learn, to be better. Why not just focus on the future and again without trying too hard to author its fate.

d) Your circle of friends

Wait a minute, who are your friends? Is it that gambler who takes every chance to seek validation from how well he can roll the dice because he lacks confidence? Is it that nosy neighbor who gossips about everyone including herself? Is it that woman next door who keeps herself buried in fear of facing the world where every passing woman 'could be her husband's lover'? Is it that boy next door who'll stop at nothing to satisfy his 'man-ego' by sleeping around with every girl within reach?

People that you choose as your friends should be those that rub in bewitchingly infectious positive vibes. Choose such people who energize you, who challenge you to be better and

who complements you.

e) Avoid self-comparison

We are all different and the moment you make the mistake of comparing your life with other people's, then you start living in limitations, you start living as if tied to a leash, oppressed and with no one to set you free because you are your own oppressor.

Instead of trying so hard to be someone else, do everything possible to be uniquely you. You can bet there will never be anyone else deserving your emulation than yourself.

Practice lots of self-love by seeing yourself as good enough without the need for anyone's approval. Life is too short to keep chasing shadows so start living in reality, living in today!

Chapter 4

Invent a Powerful Support Team

Not Just Life Skills.....

When it comes to enduring and finally overcoming difficulties in life, no doubt life skills comes in handy. You've therefore got to be tough enough to make it through the storms and always have an ace up your sleeve.

In essence, you've got to be your own super hero. Motivational helpers teach us to understand the norm that everyone else is busy trying to save their own fate and that it's either us or ourselves. But is it always the case? Are we really that well armed to hold it down any time any day?

Life skills are a plus, a core recipe in overcoming adversity and a must have. However, even with the best harnessed resilience strategy, we cannot overlook the fact that we are human without super powers. Only a super hero can go testing all depths of waters and enduring the fate without needing someone to save them when drowning threatens.

You'll Need Help at one Point

So what is a social support network? This is a beneficial network of family, friends and peers who surface as a strong pillar of strength when adversity strikes hard. Having the support of close

relatives and friends acts as strong pillar of support in such times you find yourself at the verge of breaking down.

A strong social support network comes in handy as your independent body. In fact, a support network impacts not as just a pillar in times of trying times but having someone to help you overcome stressful times has health benefits too.

Unlike a support group, a social support network is something that can be bred prior to any particular onset of stress and it needs not be formalized through meetings but only through casual voluntary interactions.

Building Your Support Network

You'll need to exercise caution when choosing your social support network. Make sure therefore that these are people you feel comfortable around. People you are comfortable with their beliefs, their practices and influence.

Again, it shouldn't happen that when you are in desperation and struggling hard is when you go building your support network, you need to keep in touch with them even when things are going on well.

Be very careful with negative friends or relatives whose role is to sink your ship even deeper. These will not only manage to waste your precious time incredibly so but will also leave you all drained and miserable. Such is the kind you need to start weeding from your circle of close friends and relatives if you are about to successfully endure and overcome your adversities.

The beauty of sharing your Worries

The biggest problem with problems in life is that they don't unfold one at a time. Rather, they often appear in clusters, funny but they seem to carry puppies with them too. After taking care of one, another pops to replace it and it's not unusual for someone to find themselves at crossroads wondering what they ever did to deserve it all.

It's not Karma, and you're not being punished; it's just the inevitable odds with life. Combining the economic hassles and now the drama with life's adversities can bring you down to a low point.

At a certain point a quick fix cannot change the facts but what if you let someone else in on your worries? True, they can't take away the worries you have but they can help make the situation better. Given that those people you encircle in your social support team are people you love, if someone loves you back they will no doubt want to help you deal with your dilemmas and woes.

Benefits of having a strong social support team

Talking about your issues helps shed some light on the possible solution, more like therapy, now personal therapy. Knowing that someone's got your back and that assurance of emotional support can make incredible difference during most desperate moments.

Your psychological well being is highly impacted by the presence of supportive relationships. Here are the underlying benefits that come with harnessing a powerful social support network:-

1. Brings a sense of belonging

Not only does spending time with other people help to ward off loneliness, spending time with positive and valuable people in your life helps find better ways to channel your worries and cares instead of bottling them up.

2. **Boost self confidence**

Having such people that are willing to be in your life voluntarily and unconditionally communicates value in respect to you.

You've got to be a really good person for them to want to be associated with you. This realization helps to reinforce both self worth and self love.

3. **Acts as security-** A strong social support network allows you valuable access to advice, information, guidance and all sort of needed assistance any day, any time. Knowing you have people you can unconditionally look up to in times of need offers such comfort and assurance you need to keep going despite the situation.

Chapter 5

Growing a Tough Skin- Life is never Perfect!

Resilience at its Best

From the fact that change is both unpredictable and inevitable to the glaring nature of gain and loss, it becomes almost impossible to evade adversity. Resilience is therefore the ability to successfully adapt amidst all possible disasters and threats to humanity. It is the capacity a human being possesses to withstand catastrophes and stress.

Think of earthquakes, tornadoes and other natural calamities. While they can all be devastating, the affected communities and individuals are able to rebuild their lives and go on living.

Resilience isn't about experiencing a smooth sail without pain or stress; it's the ability to experience grief, sadness, disappointments, suffering and pain through loss and adversity. The resilience path lies in working through such emotions and stress effects towards finding a solution every time.

Positivity as fuel for resilience

You should know that resilience and happiness have so much in common. Those people enjoying positive, close relationships from their social support network are better equipped to deal with adversity and stress. This is because they get to derive as much satisfaction and joy from these relationships every day.

The state of being happy is seen when you are feeling more positive emotions than negative ones. It happens when you are able to derive satisfaction and meaningfulness from your life. So no, it doesn't mean a stress-free life or a life free of adversity, understand that most happy people feel as much pain and suffer as much as those feeling unhappiness in life.

You see positivity and endurance must go hand in hand. As ironic as it may sound, most positive emotions surface because there was once negative emotions. For instance, compassion and forgiveness comes as a result of being wronged or emotionally hurt.

Creativity and flow are cultivated by countless instances of failure and immense risks taken. In essence, having developed resilience means you experienced both the good and the bad and are still standing strong with your head held up high.

What doesn't kill you.....

Looking back in life at past adversities you managed to overcome; surely this cannot be worse than them. Growth is not determined by past mistakes, in fact, it is better facilitated by that. Cognitive appraisal is a resilience prescription that involves looking at your present adversity positively and reframing it.

This means assimilating the challenges and suffering into your life view and moving past that. Assimilating the odds into your life doesn't necessarily make them part of you neither do they get to define you in any way; it offers rather an avenue for growth. We call that post-traumatic growth and you can still bet your entire fortune on that fact that what doesn't kill you only makes you stronger.

This again doesn't mean that the end of your failures or adversities has come. Far from it as there will be future disappointments and reminders of past trauma. Choose to see everything in the positive, as a

growth opportunity.

No one grows to reaching their full potential without failure, no one ever has. The point is to never yield to failure or disappointment, the point is to keep pushing forward.

Keep Going, Its only Temporary

The harsh reality is that we shall face difficulties as long as we are in this human form. Whether with work, family, finances, relationships, or peers, tough times are inevitable. The secret lies in never allowing hardships to discourage you by understanding that it is only short term.

Knowing that whatever has a beginning must have an end helps breed positivity and faith. Ever heard of the saying that goes, “Tough times never last, but tough people do?” Well, you can bet no one knows the depths of their strength until they come face to face with adversity. Luckily, it is not the strongest of the species that survives adversity but rather the most intelligent and responsive to change.

It calls for knowledge of what it takes to persevere, it takes a tough character, and it takes a hardened heart to pain. There’s just got to be hidden opportunities amidst the adversity, pursue that and all in all, keep your head held up high. It is as easy to be tempted to give in to adversity and exhibit negativity and that’s why it’s important to keep reminding yourself of your goals, why you must keep fighting.

Characteristics that defines a resilient person

Sure you are wondering whether you fall into the category of the resilient personalities. As we’ve already learnt, resilient people are the complete opposite of pessimists.

As a million dollar personality trait, they are those people who see their mistakes and failures as valuable lessons and as opportunity for growth. They never let their flaws define their self-worth or abilities; they are champions after the biggest price, their sanity!

Here are traits that define a resilient person:-

- a) First and foremost, a resilient person has a positive approach towards life. It is the one who knows the past is gone and only envisions better days ahead.
- b) A resilient person also has solid goals that are not altered by circumstances not to mention a strong desire to oversee their achievement.
- c) A resilient person boasts of compassion, empathy and cares less of other people's opinion towards him/her.
- d) A resilient person sees every challenge as an opportunity to be better and not a paralyzing event.
- e) A resilient person knows the limits with such situations they cannot control. Instead of seeing themselves as victims, resilient persons focus their time and energy on what can be done, what they have control over.

Chapter 6

Be Grateful for the Good Things

Living as if life was a miracle

If you did not know the in-depth meaning of gratitude, it means acknowledging simple pleasures, counting your blessings, it means being utterly thankful. Gratitude means learning to live life as if everything in it was a miracle.

In essence, finding time to be grateful makes you a much happier and resilient person in all aspects. Thankfulness also helps strengthen relationships, helps reduce stress and impacts greatly on your overall health. When facing challenges and adversity in life, you will be surprised the depths an instance of gratitude can scale tagging along untold comfort and assurance.

Sadly though, we are incredibly forgetful and often tend to overlook all the good we have going on in our life whenever adversity approaches. You see to say you are grateful isn't to mean that everything in your life is just perfect; it just communicates the fact that you are aware of your immeasurable blessings.

Being grateful even as things are not going your way shows a spirit of life appreciation. No matter how things turn out, refuse to live in regrets. Think of the inexhaustible things in life that helps

brighten your day. A smile from a stranger, catching up with an old friend, accomplishing a challenging task, feeling loved and appreciated or finding fulfillment in your job... the list is endless. So now you realize that almost everything in this life that makes us truly happy comes with no charge at all. The most important thing to do is to be mindful of these things.

Complaining is a waste of time

Do you find yourself complaining much, probably a little bit too much in that regard? Looking back, what does your complaining ever achieve? It is true sometimes we complain while completely oblivious of its happening.

Often, you find that most people who constantly complain about their lives harbor a lot of negativity. They always look out for the bad and ugly and always miss to spot something good when it sprouts. It seems for them complaining comes across as the easiest thing to do in times of difficulties but this mentality only inhibits future success and keeps open wounds exposed to further menace.

Fixing a problem always seems more tasking than complaining and playing the blame game to someone with a negative mindset. A positive minded person however finds homage in the ability to reverse the odds with a challenge and complaining is the last thing in their mind.

Say you have a yard full of roses, given the warmth roses compel; does it now seem easier to complain that the rose yard is full of thorns or to be happy that the thorn yard has roses? It deems therefore indeed time that you ditch those negative thoughts and chose to focus on finding a solution.

Extravagance vs. Those Small Little Things

It is quite easy to become immune to those small little things we've got going well in our lives. We find that we yearn so much for extravagant achievements and often material satisfaction and this pair

often overshadow the priceless little gems in life. While pursuing the quest to reach the “highs” we can easily lose sight of the fact that everyday life is full of great miracles all unfolding one after the other.

Learning to appreciate those things that you regard normal plays a gigantic role when it comes to dealing with adversity and stress. You find that you are able to derive peace and happiness from the smallest, tiniest happens and you become completely liberated from worry.

Failing to acknowledge and respectively appreciate those little things breeds certain intolerance to happiness and the fullness of life. You see when your attention and energy isn't focused on what is right, special, mystic and beautiful, then you will dwell more on the impossible, the wrong and irritating stuff.

You find yourself looking out for possible problems and failures rather than anticipating those small happens right within your touch that possess power to sweep aboard immense joy.

Your Habit Becomes Your Prophecy

When you focus your attention more on what's going right with your life, what's special and precious, the payoff is more than enticing. You experience magic by just your very existence and every moment becomes worth to treasure. You stop complaining of the garbage dumped by the road side because you see the beauty of trees and hear the beautiful melodies of the birds when you look that direction. Eventually, your habits become self-fulfilled prophecies, you start claiming life and its fullness.

You've just got to stop and consider that person lying frail on their death bed, knowing any minute, any second life will be no more for them. That person is already resolved to the fact there is no more hope, that person would give anything just to be able to walk in your shoes, just to live!

As a gratitude challenge, think of the air you breathe, that you can see while someone else somewhere is blind. Think of the fact that you slept last night and saw today's dawn, someone else passed on the same night. You are surrounded by love, a loving spouse and adorable kids, not everyone has that! You walk to the refrigerator sure that there is something to bite every time, someone else is going hungry day in, day out. You can stand and move around whenever you want, someone else is bed ridden. You have clean drinking water; someone else is dying of dehydration and thirst. The air you breathe is because God has been immensely merciful.

In essence, everywhere you look around you, you are surrounded by such things that are not there because you are as deserving, but because of some indescribable favour and might. Don't go taking things for granted, even the slightest that comes down to nothing in terms of money, because it is those things that money can't buy us that we can't live without!

Chapter 7

Seek Role models- Those who've dealt with Similar Situations

Victory Awaits, Keep Going

You see this situation you find yourself in right now, it's only temporary and you are not the first one to be tried and tested. Embrace the awareness that adversity is inevitable in the life of a mortal and let that awareness mark the beginning of change. If you keep resisting the odds you allow them to persist, you allow them to gain momentum, and you accept defeat.

Let's be realistic, is there one single corner of the world where struggle and pain have never been felt? With such disasters as the tsunamis, tribal and border wars, floods and other natural calamities, it beats logic that anyone would expect a life without strains.

Even with the best social support and everything going on well in your life, you still get to be touched by the cruel hand of death, tragedy and loss. All you need to remember is that as painful as life can get, the choice is yours whether to suffer or endure.

Finding Support through Adversity

Nothing beats the liberation a strong social support connection spells. Knowing you have the unconditional support of family and friends at all times helps face life with a different approach.

Adversity can lead to adverse reactions that are not unusual with any overwhelmingly stressful situation. Feelings such as sickness, denial, retribution, inactivity, anger, fear and even guilt are commonly associated with adverse situations. Sadly, these feelings only manage to worsen the situation while greatly impeding on possible recovery.

However, what most people still don't understand is that, we all have control over adversity. In fact, we are somehow conditioned by how other people directly or indirectly connected to us respond to unpleasant circumstances. This becomes the reason why you hear of people especially teenagers finding time to seek motivation in their role models.

You see role models are important in any culture. To have someone you can admire and look up to and whose example you can follow is important, timely indeed. A role model however doesn't just sprout and it's not someone you select on impulse. This needs to be someone who breeds positivity and one the same note leads a life worth emulating.

If possible, emulating someone who has dealt with adversity and overcame in the past is the best resolution. Someone who triumphed over life's adversities and instead of surrendering to them ended up leading a productive, successful life.

Let's say you spot that someone who's battled with cancer, someone abandoned during pregnancy, someone who've never known the love of family, someone who lost their sight or hearing, someone

who lost their ability to walk. The first thing that comes into your mind is admiration; you can't help but sink in awe of their endured tribulations, perseverance and deliverance.

In essence, let your role model be someone who's battled adversity and conquered. It is their resilience, their determination and persistence that enabled them to scale past their adversities and prevail. If such people could have done it, surely you are neither made of ice or charcoal to yield to the flames of adversity, you too can overcome!

The Great Successors Had Prime Motivation

It starts from a young age; you became the person you are today because you had the influence of role models, someone you always looked up to. At that age it could have been a teacher, a parent or a sibling.

Still, sometimes when we lack much influence from those people around us as in the case of those who grow up with mean parents, our role models becomes fictitious characters. It could be a celebrity or a movie super star, someone whose role play made you feel the good there is in the world. So whoever these people had been, you had wished you'd be like them one day, be able to live and walk in their path.

To this date, those people you see out there that are always striving to be a better version of themselves share one thing in common, they boast of having role models in their lives.

Adversity calls for self improvement in every aspect and the presence of a role model manages to evoke just that. In fact, people rarely improve when they lack a better version to emulate.

Benefits of having a role model

Role models don't just teach us, they motivate and challenge us to such extents where we are able to uncover our true potential and overcome life's limitations. If you manage to choose wisely and your role model manages to fulfill their role in making you a better person, you can enjoy multiple benefits that come with having a role model including:-

- You'll try to copy their qualities and practice them as much as possible and this gets you harnessing vibrant traits like discipline, positivity, courage, self-confidence, dedication and compassion just to name a few.
- By emulating a role model who's struggled with a fate as similar as yours, then chances remain that he/she will provide the best possible solution to your problems or simply help you to see the good amidst the tides of adversity.
- A role model may help you change your entire outlook on life and this kind of change has the magnitude to forge you to even becoming someone else's role model.
- Role models are neither without flaws, when we indulge in the quest for the things they had to suffer to forge this eminence they carry today, our problems becomes like tiny drops in the ocean of endless possibilities.

Choose Wisely,

While selecting a role model that is going to help put your thoughts and actions into the right perspective, you need to make the right choices. Don't base your selection on fame, but base it rather on character. Some of the most popular celebrities today are the opposite of role models; many are anti-models, lost sheep in need of a shepherd themselves.

Here's what you can look out for:-

- Look for people who've achieved similar results as the ones you are hoping to achieve.

- You can make your role model someone who struggled with the same challenges as you are experiencing and find out how they overcame them.
- You can also find someone with a fascinating, awing life story that brings immense motivation and uplifts you indescribably.
- Depending on what you are struggling with and if the struggle is because you are in lack of it; look for someone that has that. It could be discipline, patience or self confidence. Mimicking this trait in your role model teaches you to have the same too.

In essence, it is all up to you to know exactly what it is that you are looking for then pursue it in all the right avenues. Surely you are not about to meet your role model in a late night club or a casino right? The way of life of your prospective role model needs to speak of morality in abundance.

There is also no limit to how many role models you can have so it is therefore quite okay to emulate people within the many diverse departments in life. Ranging from career, relationships, family and many others, there are many aspects in life that requires the right sailor, the right map and just the right ship dock.

Chapter 8

Read insatiably on self improvement

Reading not a Hobby? Not to Worry!

Does it take you decades to want to walk into a study room and engage yourself in some good reading? Well, in this case it deems certain that reading is yet to become a hobby for you. So you are not an avid reader, that's okay. Remember not all hobbies come with the mere existence; some are nurtured, and cultivated and so can reading.

Understand therefore that there will always be those that read as a daily dose for them and those that read because of circumstances. Like let's say your marriage is crumbling down, are almost out of aces so you resort to finding solace in a book that gives guidance on how to save a failing marriage. Regardless of the fact that you can't remember the last time you read a single line in the newspaper, you get to read this one because it deems imperative.

However, there is that other kind of reader whose sanity depends on comprehensive reading. A good book is always comprised in their shopping list; for this one, reading is deeply engraved in their skin.

Reading; Cultivated and Nurtured

So have you lived on the notion that people read as a hobby too long to accept a different version of

the same? That's a lot of brain washing right there but thank God you still have a mind of your own.

Let's see, what is a hobby? Isn't it defined as something you love doing? How do you know that you love doing something? Isn't it as a result of prolonged habit of doing it again and again that harnesses such fondness and voluntary commitment? You see, reading just like any other hobby is a habit, harnessed and nurtured to brew an irresistible bonding and liking.

At this point, you should know that at any one time you can choose to make a certain habit your hobby by cultivating and nurturing fondness towards it. Reading isn't an exception; the most avid writers first acquired the habit which is what they nurtured over time to become a great fondness which then translated to being the 'hobby'.

Just like many other goals we have in life like losing weight, falling in love or nailing that dream career, the satisfying thrill that comes from their achievement remains the cutting edge. Think therefore of reading as a goal, work on achieving it, nurture it and in time you'll realize that you read not because it's a hobby but just because it's a cause worth pursuing.

Focus on Inspirational Reading

Presuming you are now scaling closer to becoming an avid reader, sure you can hold down a good book at this junction right? With the immense talent growing daily, there is inexhaustible inspirational material everywhere you go.

You see, most people due to the demanding life today prefer to take a sneak preview of online blogs.

Don't take this personally because blogs are great and carry deep and valuable insights; also very easy to incorporate any time of day, but books, they irrefutably play the complementary role on blogs every time. Books give you a much deeper in-depth focus, helping you step up a mile in your thinking.

Amidst life's challenges, taking refuge in inspirational reading serves as a strong pillar that encourages perseverance, endurance and overcoming. Reading something motivational first thing in the morning can be a great head start. This means that your reading won't be squeezed out by those other things demanding your limited time of day.

During lunch hour, instead of watching YouTube gags, why not indulge in a good book? Steal an impeccable half an hour, lounged on a park bench or wherever you feel comfortable and hibernate into a different world.

Still, reading acts as the best way to close a hard day of work. This not only helps 'switch off' from the work mode into relaxation but it is often at this time where reading isn't competing with your other commitments because the only thing you are looking forward to in your schedule is some good sleep.

Self Improvement Reading through Adversity

No doubt we will keep facing adversities in life, sometimes such that is easily manageable and sometimes such that needs a legendary game plan to overcome. While struggles and woes are inevitable with life, hope lies in having enlightenment on what to do to make these times easier.

Think of reading for instance. Someone will attest to the deliverance that once came with holding their very first self-improvement book in their hands. For most people, at that defining moment, they

experience a baffling realization that their fate was not laid down in stone and that they could become their own coach and drill master.

Motivational and self improvement books are set out as a training course that leaves you compelled to overcome. All you need to do is to listen to that voice speaking gently to you, that voice that communicates the fact that things could always be worse, but aren't. Self improvement books helps you to see the very best version of yourself bringing self-awakening of such strength and resilience you never knew you possessed.

Self improvement reading helps you see challenges as not just misfortunes threateningly outside your comfort zone but rather as valuable assets that helps define and complement you in the long run. In fact, the greatest achievers wouldn't have made it to a pedestal of such unyielding fame and admiration had they not gone through the igniting flames of adversity and pain.

Again, with self-improvement reading material, you get to stimulate your creativity while indulging yourself in actual steps to take through unconventional tactics. You are initiated through success tactics of the great masters of endurance.

Through application and adaptability of such actions and resolutions that worked out for others, this inspires and sharpens your thinking towards an even better solution. Be aware though that most people blinded by too much ambition tend to get ensnared by schemes that dictate on quick money acquisition ideas.

Regardless of how much financial adversity you may be experiencing, don't waste your time on such content trying to brainwash your mind to thinking that there are overnight get rich schemes. Not only will this kind of thinking completely weigh you down with disappointments, but it also acts so

mercilessly on your optimism and zeal. There has never been such thing as an express path to instant wealth, neither will there ever be!

Chapter 9

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Be Determined and Persist to Overcome

Break Down or Gain Momentum

Persistence is seen in the ability and willingness to keep going amidst challenges and life's misfortunes. This attribute greatly helps in achieving professional, personal and academic goals. Role models too play a significant role in helping us develop persistence and also apply relentless effort towards achievement of our set goals.

In the face of adversity, persistence is the definitive difference between a failed outcome and a successful one. This awakening no doubt prompts us to want to harness the virtue of persistence. In such trying moments, you realize you reason like on autopilot making it a natural reaction to want to lower your angle.

However, regardless of how many road blocks you encounter in your path, don't ever be tempted to lower your expectations or goals for the sake of that particular part of your life. As a lead warrior in your life, you cannot back down from your goals just because the going got tough.

Persistence through Faith

The Bible describes an instance where Jesus rebuked a storm that would have swept his disciples ashore. Note that amidst the adversities with the storm that threatened the lives of these men that had become Christ's followers, all they had required all along was faith, which would have been enough.

I am inclined to think therefore that what Jesus meant when he called his disciples men of small faith was that they were too weak to persist, persevere and endure despite having witnessed the many miracles Jesus had performed. In a broader perspective, it also feels like the spirit of fear was also being rebuked since the disciples chose fear instead of trusting in the power Jesus had to bring everything under control.

This teaches us further that the persistence of our faith shall lead us to overcome all adversities, troubles and challenges in life. The only way to overcome trials and adversity in life is therefore to practice persistence through faith. To remain hopeful in the middle of the storms, to keep charging even when the target fades to remain unbent even as tribulations keeps slapping in on our sanity.

Never Yielding, Never Bending

Instead of seeing adversity, choose to open your eyes wider to diversity. See rather how far you can scale, how far you can thrive, how much you can learn and how much you can grow through adversity.

While you must have already embraced the odds with adversity, it also means that you are open to possible suffering. However, ask yourself this question; if you suffer and triumph, will there be victory in the end?

It's not always easy to welcome setbacks; hence the secret is to refuse to yield to them but rather to use them as building blocks for your self-acclaimed tower of success. Don't live on the lookout always hoping for someone to walk in and redeem you. Instead, choose to play the role of hero in this fairy you are just about to write.

Hero's are made through tears, sweat and blood. It's not going to be easy because you see, life remains a struggle. It will humble you severely; attempt to break you down every chance possible and just when you are gathering muscle to rise in vigor, it will smack you down ruthlessly and needlessly, because life is never fair.

Your role to play is therefore not to bend, not to yield, to not succumb to life's brutality.

The greatest achievers of all time are the ones that make history and let's face it; it is that part of how their triumph redeemed them that we find ourselves reading over and over. It is their triumph, persistence, perseverance and resilience that make their story so awe inspiring and great.

How to Develop Persistence amidst Life's Adversities

There is not a time that success ever came cheap. In essence, if we want to succeed in life we cannot downplay triumph expecting it to be a smooth sail. This is because adversity and triumph form a connecting bridge to success.

Therefore, if ever you must pray, wish or hope to overcome adversity, pursue the enlightenment that comes with having the trait of persistence plus the determination and will to ensure to the very end.

Lack of persistence remains the reason why success is often garnered by just the minority few and you can bet within this minority group, the one determinant thing these achievers have in common is persistence.

Here are tips that helps develop persistence:-

a) Define your goals

You cannot achieve anything without setting goals, so determine what it is that you really want to achieve.

This helps you remain focused throughout adversity because despite how many times you fall, you keep going until you reach your target as it now becomes your motivation.

b) Anticipate setbacks and obstacles – Along the way, know that there will be setbacks and obstacles and respectively prepare for them.

Remember that failure is important and you should see it as an opportunity to bounce back

better and more resilient and not a hindering block to your aspirations.

c) **Initiate through actions-** You cannot actually succeed in doing something until you initiate it. Procrastination and fear often keep us from daring to achieve things. So it is true you will not fail if you don't try, but neither will you achieve.

d) **Brew a strong support network-** No man is an island remember? There's got to be someone you can turn to along the way to help set your goals right. As much as resilience at work always complements success, nothing beats the power of positive reinforcement in the tides of hardships.

Someone that you hold in high esteem and one you look up is most likely as committed to see you succeed as much as you are determined to claim your victory.

e) **Don't lose track-** You will need to remember that it is always when you are the verge of giving up that success is about to be crowned. Therefore keep focus on the big prize and avoid getting caught up in negative thinking whatsoever.

Losing focus at this point will be like creating a whole new obstacle. It will be like starting all over again, losing the points earned so far including the bonus points.

Chapter 10

Seeing Obstacles as a Stepping Stone

Stumble but Remain Standing

Character cannot be realized in the land of milk and honey. In fact, if you were to take a queen to a peasant's home, chances are she will not live to see another dawn. Her immune system is not just delicate but her adaptability is weak not to mention that her survival is also conditioned quite as if on autopilot.

Reverse the odds however and take the same peasant in a queen's castle, he can only thrive in all aspects. This retaliates further the notion that character is always best forged through the raging fires of adversity and pain. It is through hardships, tears and sweat that we realize our untapped potential.

Again you can bet you'll never know how to pick a lock unless you are locked outside. In essence, without obstacles along our path, then the road to success remains too good to be true.

Do you think that the greatest achievers never crawled first before they could learn to walk? They once staggered, fell, rose again holding on an object and just when they were beginning to feel the energy standing on two feet can charge, they fell again.

They never yielded to these setbacks, so they kept trying, struggling back up, falling again and again but rising with even greater vigor than when they fell. The reason they never succumbed to their woes was because they possessed the undoubted confidence to start again every time and that's how they got to walk straight and still are, walking!

Obstacle? No, a Stepping Stone.....

So it didn't work out despite all the hard work you put into it? Okay, what do you do? Cry? Yell? Find someone else to blame? Do nothing? or try again? With a positive mindset, you already know the answer to this question. You already know what to do to deal with your failure.

Only a coward will try to shift the blame, only a fool will sulk in misery crying and yelling about it, but as for a warrior, this becomes a chance to prove his resilience, perseverance and persistence all at once.

Instead of viewing these setbacks that life throws at you as obstacles that hinder your success, view them rather as timely and as a rare chance to grow, evolve and rise into your greatest calling.

It is these obstacles that drive us to such levels of consciousness, right towards the right path. Again obstacles shouldn't tag along misery or suffering as this only hinders possible growth and achievement. It is how you deal with them that matters.

So you are on your way to your destiny and you reach this wall that blocks the way there. You have the choice to stop, crumble and sulk in thoughts of impossibilities or you can find a way to climb the wall and continue with your journey.

In essence, you can either keep an optimistic attitude by viewing this as a stepping stone to greater things or rule these obstacles as the culprits for your failure. The choice is all yours!

Soaring High on a Positive Mindset

If there is one lesson that life never forgets to teach us, it is the power of our thoughts. Often times, self talk greatly inhibits on maximum human output. The best way to get what we want and where we want to be is through first changing the way we think and view ourselves.

The things you say about you and think about yourself have such power to either break or build you.

You alone are the master of your destiny and this means that it's not an option to take 100% responsibility of everything that happens to you but imperative.

You need to hold yourself accountable without blaming anyone. Without excuses, take the wheel and make it an initiative to change the odds in your life. Think of your life as a book and yourself as the author. Think of how you would want the story to flow and end.

You see, you may not necessarily have control over what happens in your life but you have the utmost control over your reaction to what happens to you. The best reaction would be to convert self destructive, limiting and negative thoughts into positive and motivating ones. Instead of using negative affirmations like "I am not good enough to do this", counter that with positive affirmations like "No one can do this better than I can", "I am simply awesome". With realistic goals at hand, refuse to stop at anything until you achieve them. Remember limitations and self doubts are a waste of time.

The Aftermath, Happily Ever After

Just like in courtship, the hope lies in being able to build a marriage on this promise of love. It is the hope to persist, the hope to persevere, the hope of resilience and the hope of ultimate endurance. It doesn't really matter how rough or how ground breaking it gets; just keep your eyes fixed on the big prize.

As obstacles charge towards you with renewed energy, counter them with the same momentum even fiercer in resilience and with zeal to overcome. Remember you are not in competition with anyone and the only person to impress and redeem through it all is you. By the end of the day, it's about proving your worth to yourself.

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So are you going to rise and soar to becoming the best version of yourself or are you going to allow life's adversity to steal your crown of endurance? Know that with or without liberty to choose between adversity and privilege, life still makes better sense when there are challenges to overcome, dreams to fulfill and milestones to achieve.

To be able to leave a mark of success when all is said and done, to be able to touch on the life of another through your endurance, to be able to scale beyond limitations and life's adversities, to be able to live! Ideally, no one should live their life as if on a threshold, not when everyone remains the master of their own destiny!

Conclusion

Thank you so much for downloading this book.

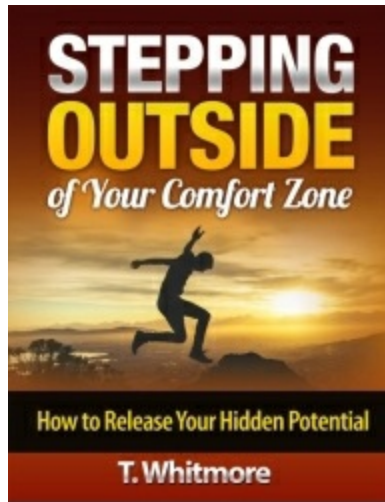
I hope the content herein has managed to serve as enlightenment towards overcoming adversity. I hope through the tips and in-depth information provided in this book, you will manage to garner more persistence, perseverance and resilience

On that note, if indeed the book has been helpful to you, please do not forget to extend the bliss. It would be sad if someone close to you missed the chance to benefit from the content in this book as much as you have.

Thanks again and good luck in everything!

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Starting Now
Taking Chances And
Figuring it Out as You Go

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Chapter 1: Make the Big Changes You Talk About

We all intend to do big things with our lives. We graduate high school and enter the workforce or head off to college with stars in our eyes. We have the best of intentions. However, reality demands that you start paying those bills on your own, find and pay for a residence and keep a job that helps make sure there is money in your pocket. So, your focus goes to these issues primarily. You still intend to get to those big dreams, but you can not put the effort in today. Then, things slowly get away from us. We graduate college or have spent a few years in the workforce, trying to make a name for ourselves. We intend things to go a certain way, yet they never do.

Time goes on and suddenly, your plans and dreams seem far out of reach. However, they do not have to be. Instead of getting stuck in where your life is or on how different the path is from what you dreamed or even intended, you can Start Now.

Start Taking Massive Action

The important thing is to commit to the big changes. Start making the effort to accomplish the big goals and do the necessary steps to get there.

In order to move forward toward those goals that seem out of reach, you need to focus and put significant effort toward moving in that direction. It may make you uncomfortable, it may not meet with the full approval of those around you. Still, you need to do it in order to make yourself happy and to remind you that you can do anything you set your mind to.

Avoiding Naysayers

A big part of success is to not fall prey to what others say and the negative opinions that others tend to throw your way. You may not be that idealistic teenager anymore, but that does not mean you are too old to accomplish anything. Nor are you too (insert description here) to accomplish the goal you set for yourself as a younger, more optimistic you.

The best way to help yourself get on a roll toward positive changes is to avoid those who would try to cut you down and spread their negativity. There are a few ways to do this.

- Recognize them – Naysayers can come in any form, and the worst part is they can be anyone. That means they can be well-meaning loved ones, jealous co-workers or seemingly rational strangers, if it comes to that. Therefore, you have to recognize the people who are not helping you move forward toward a goal.
- Weigh the Validity of the Statement – Naysayers are not always wrong. Therefore, it is important to take a seemingly negative statement and see if it has any bearing on what you are doing. Sometimes, you can take the negative feedback and learn from it. Then, you can move forward in a better way than you would have without the negative insight. Still, not all negativity can be spun to help you. Therefore, some of it will simply have to be disregarded as you keep plugging forward.
- Confront or Ignore – There are two options once you have identified the naysayer and determined if you can use their negative insights. You can either choose to confront them, point out their negativity and attempt to sway them to support your cause, or you can choose to ignore them. If you choose to confront, you have to accept the possibility that

you may not succeed in getting them to agree with you. The confrontation could end ugly. On the other hand, if you choose to ignore them, they may catch on and that situation can turn difficult as well.

- **Be Informed and Rest on Your Knowledge** – If your efforts are definitely going to face a lot of opposition, do your homework. Have arguments ready for those who aren't going to agree or who are going to try to tell you what a big waste of time your efforts are. If that does not work, at least feel confident that you know what you are doing and that it is well worth all the time and effort you are putting into the progress toward your goal. (1.1)

When possible, opt to interact with people who are going to support your goals and the efforts to achieve them. Obviously, in life that is not always possible. However, if you minimize interaction with the negative people, you can get further toward your goal faster. This is because you aren't spending time dealing with the negative input and the resulting doubt you will most likely begin to experience.

Negativity can be a huge setback for most people. Recognizing that and also identifying the people who inject that negativity, even if they don't mean to be negative, can help you deal with it in a more positive manner.

Remember that negativity is not an indication that these people doubt you can accomplish something. Typically, they think they are helping or they are simply being negative out of jealousy that you are trying to achieve your goals and they have not achieved theirs.

Keep plugging forward, no matter what is said or who is saying it. Remember that it is up to you to succeed, and their negativity has no impact on the efforts you are putting in to find success.

Chapter 2: Be Proactive: Use These Tips

Working toward big goals can be daunting. You can not simply write “Change My Life” on a chalkboard and look at that day after day until you reach success. Success could take years. Looking at that huge goal and not feeling like you are making progress is a good way to cause your own defeat. You will start feeling doubtful since you aren't moving toward that big goal fast enough.

Instead, break the larger goal down into manageable – and preferably measurable – goals that can be focused on during smaller periods of time.

Write Down your Goals on a Weekly Basis

It has long been proven that writing goals down has a significant impact on the overall success of the effort. Does that sound questionable to you? Consider the following:

A 1979 Harvard MBA program analyzed their goals. When asked if they had clear, written goals for their future, the class answered in the following:

3% had written goals and plans

13% had goals and plans that were not written down

84% did not have clear goals set

Fast forward one decade:

The 3% who had clear and written goals were making 10 TIMES what the other 97% of the class were making COMBINED.

Meanwhile, the 13% with goals that were not written down were making TWICE what the other 84% of the class were making. (2.1)

What does that mean for you? The same thing it meant for those MBA graduates. It PAYS to write down your goals. Think about it. If you can reach your goal more efficiently or more quickly or you can make more money en route to that goal, why not do so?

In that case, get out a pen and paper and start putting those goals in writing. Write down goals on a weekly basis. Split them up into segments that can be measured. Weekly goals should be things you can achieve in seven days. Then, once a month, tally the progress toward a larger goal. Those goals should be part of the big picture.

When writing down goals, the first step is the writing. Next, keep track of those goals. Write them where you can look at them off and on throughout the week, seeing where you stand on the list. Next, keep yourself accountable to that list. If you can not keep yourself accountable, it's time to find someone who can help you do so.

Find an Accountability Partner

Putting your goals in writing is one way to hold yourself accountable. You can determine what is important and what needs done before you can do the next step. However, even then you can lose some momentum and start doubting yourself. You can start to slack off, promising to get at it again

tomorrow, or next week.

For that reason, it is a good idea to find someone who can keep you on task. Knowing that someone is paying attention to your efforts can go a long way to making sure you do what you need to do, and you do it now.

Find someone that is trying to achieve a similar goal. That way, you can give each other advice or share what worked or did not work for you. Then, you can both have feedback that can go a long way toward getting you both to the goal in the end.

Dieters have found that having someone else that hopes to lose weight paying attention to how they are doing is great incentive to keep working to drop those pounds. Likewise, another person who is hoping to save a certain amount of money is going to pay attention to see what is working for you in terms of filling up your savings account for that car, vacation or new home.

The same can be said of people trying to start a family, save some money, invest wisely or make headway in a business venture. If you find someone that is like-minded, you can keep each other on task, trade war stories and compare what is working and what is not. That can go a long way toward keeping you motivated and helping you keep moving forward.

Remember You Are Expert Enough

Since you are at a point in your life where you are past optimistic youth and not yet to wizened elder, you are an expert.

An expert at what? Well, that depends on you. However, it is safe to say you are no longer a novice at everything.

Take stock of your talents, the things you have found you are good at within the jobs you have held and in the activities you enjoy outside the office, or at least while you are not being paid. These are the areas where you can take pride and consider yourself an expert.

This isn't because you know EVERYTHING. Instead, it is because you have put in the time and gained experience in what works and what does not in regard to these particular areas of life.

Therefore, you know more than someone who has not put in the time and effort and does not have the tried experience that you have.

So you are not an expert, per se. However, you are Expert Enough. You can help others based on what you have done. You can tell someone when you know a certain effort or technique is not going to bring about the desired results. This, in turn, can help you gain confidence you will need to try the new experiences and see what works and what does not on your way to the goal you are setting now.

You are Expert Enough.

Chapter 3: Potential Hurdles to Overcome

Everyone develops bad habits. They may not have interfered with the jobs you have done up to now or the goals you set that were smaller and therefore have been met. Still, they can interfere when you set out to make a big change. Those bad habits can include two very important ones that greatly interfere with success: procrastination and talking yourself out of something before you even begin.

Procrastination

How common is procrastination? Well, it happens to the best of us, it happens to the worst of us and, honestly, it happens to everyone in between. At some point, most people if not every human on this earth finds themselves putting off chores or a set task to do something else or simply to do nothing. If you have a set due date, a lot of people find ways to keep avoiding the task until the last possible minute.

Officially, PsychologyToday says 20% of people are chronic procrastinators (3.1). They find it almost impossible to do a project or a set task before it absolutely must be completed. Some people even wait until the deadline is on them to begin the project. This means that, if it does get completed, it is not until after the time it was to be completed. However, there are ways to avoid this issue. With some effort, the desire to procrastinate can be overcome.

Tips to Avoid Procrastination:

- Recognize the Tendency – If you are playing a game on your phone, reading through spam

email you had no interest in reading last week when you got it or checking out the latest gossip on social media instead of getting started on something for work: you are procrastinating.

How often do you do this? When given a task, do you start mentally making a list of things that need to happen, or do you try to find something else to distract you? If you do not get started right away, you may be a chronic exhibitor of procrastination.

- Discover the Issue behind it – There can be any of a number of reasons why you tend to procrastinate instead of jumping right in to get the job done. In fact, each time can be a different reason. Still, the following are some possibilities for why you choose to do anything but the task at hand.

12. Are you disorganized? - If this is the case, you can try to split the project up and do it in a logical order that can be done with certain tasks grouped together that help your organization.

13. Is the task unappealing? - There is no avoiding the fact that sometimes you won't want to do something. However, recognizing that can help you get past it and get going on the project, to get it over with sooner.

14. ;Are you expecting perfection? - Perfectionists are big procrastinators. This is because it is hard to be perfect. Recognize your unrealistic expectations and put the effort in to simply get the job done.

15. Do you have trouble making decisions? - Recognize that you are afraid of doing the wrong thing. Then, if you have questions, ask someone. Otherwise, commit to doing the best you can and make the decision that seems most logical.

16. Does the task seem impossible from the start? (3.2) – Some people build up a task until it seems like there is no way to get it done. Then, they put it off so it becomes impossible to do. Recognize your tendency to do this and start with a small

task, then build. It becomes more manageable in this manner.

- Find Motivation to Do the Given Task – Some people find that setting a reward for getting the job done, even if it is a simple thing that no one else is aware of, helps them to keep on track. If you promise yourself a snack or a cup of coffee after getting the task accomplished, you might work harder to get it done in a timely manner. For a bigger challenge, make the reward correspond in significance.

Recognize how much money and free time you are costing yourself by giving in to those distractions now. Those emails will be there later, when you are home and relaxing and have nothing to do.

However, right now they are ensuring you won't be home to choose between checking spam email and watching the new episode of your favorite show this evening. Or, you are costing yourself money because you could be working toward a promotion by getting things done on time or early. Instead, you put them off and do not show your supervisors you are capable of a more important job and, coincidentally, more money.

Work on one thing at a time until you get the entire project completed. That way, you can feel accomplishment with each completion of a smaller task, until they have built up without you realizing it to have fulfilled the project you were given.

Talking Yourself out of Things before You Even Try

Negative self-talk is when you seem to be your own worst enemy. You don't believe you can succeed.

It starts small, but then it can grow with the power of a tornado or a runaway train. Suddenly, you have gone from being negative about one small thing to not believing you can accomplish a big goal.

You have decided you were wrong to want to try to change your life. You retreat into what is comfortable and well-known. Now, you will never know if you could have done it because you

convinced yourself that you couldn't before you even began.

“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

- Lao Tzu

Most people have seen or heard the above quote. However, few take it to heart. When it comes to negative self-talk, that is exactly what you must remember. Also, each step takes you closer to your goal.

Tips to Deal with Negative Self-Talk:

- Distance – When you notice you are being negative, take a step back. Ask why you are thinking this particular project or goal is not attainable. Think back to when you have completed a task or reached a goal that initially you thought was impossible. Take heart from that success.
- Distract – When you find that you are thinking negatively, find something else to do. Pick something that is fun and yet takes a lot of concentration. Do some exercise, play a game that requires physical activity or get out of the environment you are in for a short period.
- Question – Ask why you are thinking in a particular way. See if you can spin the thoughts you are having. Also, consider the benefits you will miss out on by not trying to achieve this goal. Then, consider the good things that will happen if you achieve the goal.
- Put a Pin in It – If none of the above work, promise yourself to set aside the negative thoughts for now and revisit them later. Set a specific time of the day for you to deal with these thoughts. In most cases, by the time you get to that specified period, you may have

gotten past the desire to feel that way or think in that negative manner. (3.3)

Chapter 4: Starting Now with Investments

The biggest problem people have when they want to begin investing is that they have very little money set aside to put toward the endeavor. However, part of knowing you are ready to invest in things like stocks is recognizing when you have already invested enough in your future.

Investments to Make First

Investments can be tricky. However, no matter where you are in life and the following list, you can Start Now and improve your situation. All it takes is starting to think about the process and seeing where you stand and what needs more work.

Invest in the Company 401k

When investing in the company 401k, you will avoid income tax until after your retirement, when you begin to draw from the plan. Also, some companies offer to match what you put in to a certain amount. This means more money for you in the 401k. That is a benefit.

It is also important to invest in an IRA if you have that option. While neither the 401k or the IRA are investments, they are money that will be available to you upon retirement. This is important before you get into buying stock. Then, you have an assurance of being prepared for deciding to stop working and enjoy life.

Make Sure You Have Sufficient Savings (4.1)

Having a cushion for when life happens is very important. You could lose your job, or you could be injured and be forced to live off what you have put away. For some people, the norm is living paycheck to paycheck. Then, when an unforeseen expense crops up or an injury occurs, the person is in a bad spot unless family can help or their credit is good and a loan is an option. Then, you are stuck paying someone back once you are back on your feet. So, start saving.

How much should you have in savings? The answer to that requires some thought from you. You need to consider how much you will need to buy things and to maintain them once purchased in the course of a year. You will also need to decide how much you will be willing to watch your account fluctuate, and you will need to decide when you will want to be able to start using the money (4.2).

Invest in a Home First

It is a wise decision to have already become a home owner before you decide to delve into further investments like stocks. Having a home increases your real estate equity and gives you a basis for a lot of future investments. It also gives you a residence that is yours, rather than living in a rental where a lot of the decisions are taken from you.

Investing in Stocks

Once you have done the above investments, then you may start considering investment in stocks. This is where smart investing comes in. You can start an investment portfolio with less than \$1,000. All it takes is some research, some money savvy and some help.

The keys to investing with a budget of \$1,000 or less are as follows:

- TreasuryDirect – For those who want to invest conservatively, this is a great way to get started. Savings Bonds and Treasury Inflation Protection Services, or TIPS, can be purchased directly from the Treasury. Just remember that there is a reason this is a conservative investment. You will also see a low return for the money you invest.
- Direct Stock Purchase Plans – These allow you to purchase stock directly from the company, thereby skipping the brokerage and any associated fees. This means there are no minimum investment requirements to meet. However, there typically will be a small fee charged by the agent in charge of the transfer.
- Dividend Reinvestment Plans – These plans take the dividends you earn from the stock and reinvest it for more shares. This can be accomplished by setting up an account and making the deposit to cover the initial investment. Then, your stocks take care of themselves. This is great for someone who wants to put minimal time into their investment management plans.
- Incremental Purchase Plans – These allow you to use a set amount of money to buy stocks each month. For those who want more control over their stocks, this is a good option. You also do not have to buy full shares of stock with this plan. Instead, you can buy fractions and therefore have money spread across a pool of stocks. (4.3)

Remember also that it is not too early to open an IRA. With \$1,000, online discount brokers are more than happy to provide access to investment tools that previously could not be enjoyed until you had \$10,000 or more to invest. Take advantage of the availability and see your investment portfolio begin growing.

Investments can be a tricky venture on your own. Therefore, be sure to do the research or connect with people like a broker or experienced investor that is willing to give you some tips. Starting out

and putting money into something that has no guaranteed payback is a frightening choice. Make sure you are confident in the choices you are making so as to maximize the chances that it will work out in your favor.

Start Now and find investments that suit you and can help maximize your monetary gains.

Chapter 5: Starting Now with Dieting

If you are looking in the mirror and unhappy with what you see, then today is the day to Start Now with dieting. Now, that does not mean cut out a meal or only eat a certain food today. Instead, begin by researching different diets and trying to put together an exercise plan. The key to successful weight loss is a balance of watching the calories you take in and also having an adequate exercise plan that you find success in doing regularly.

For help with an exercise plan, it may be a good idea to join a gym and consult a personal trainer. However, here are a few tips for setting up a maintainable exercise plan.

An Exercise Plan You Will Stick To

- Make sure there are a variety of activities. Even the most devoted exercise enthusiast will get bored after weeks of doing the same exercises every day, week after week. Set up a routine with some alternatives so if you hit a day when you just can not make yourself go to the gym to run laps or hit the treadmill, you can throw in a day of swimming or go to a Zumba class to take up the slack.
- If you are not experienced in exercising, start out with full body routines. Make sure you have enough time to dedicate to the routine you want to complete on a regular basis. Decide if you are putting in a gym at home or if you will visit a fitness center.
- Remember that it is the rest period between workouts that allows your muscles to develop. Do not skip that rest period (48-72 hours), because then you will only end up injured and not getting the results you hope to achieve.

- When it comes to exercises, a good rule of thumb is doing three to four sets of about five exercises per workout. When you are doing an exercise, one set should be made up of roughly eight to 12 repetitions of the exercise. That should give your muscles an adequate workout.
- The more repetitions you are doing, the less time you should wait between them. That may seem counter-intuitive, but if you are hoping to fit in more reps to your overall time frame, it is best to spend less time resting in between.
- Circuits are the best way to burn fat and therefore contribute to a weight loss effort. What is a circuit? A circuit is doing a repetition of one of each of the exercises you want to accomplish, then repeating them in the same order again. Each time you do one set of each exercise, that is a circuit.

Finding the Right Diet for You

Start Now by researching the various diets that are out there. At this point, there are so many it would be impossible to discuss each one. However, we will discuss a few of the options that may work best for you to lose weight.

It is important to realize that the starvation diet, as well as many fad diets, where you subsist on only one food for a specified amount of time, will not help you in the long-term. You may lose a lot of weight fast. However, that weight includes most of the water in your body. That water is needed to maintain the body and stay healthy.

Therefore, once you start eating again or eating all the food groups, your body will come out of preservation mode, start retaining water again and a lot of the weight you lost will come right back. It

is best to commit to a type of diet that takes longer to accomplish weight loss but gives you a better chance of maintaining the loss once you have achieved it.

Consider the following types of diets as possibilities for you: (5.1)

- DASH Diet – The DASH Diet stands for Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension. The diet is balanced and includes whole grains and vegetables. It provides more good cholesterol than bad cholesterol, which is why it is successful for those trying to stop Hypertension. The diet does not have health risks, although for those with certain health conditions, it may be best to consult your doctor before starting this diet. Weight loss is a side benefit of this diet, rather than the focus. That makes this diet a good choice for those who want to eat healthier and lose weight. Combining this with regular exercise can really help with weight loss. (5.2)
- Atkins – Ranked among the top 10 for weight loss diets, the Atkins Diet is low-carb and advertises you will lose five pounds the first week. This is using The Nutrisystem Fast 5. There are four phases to the diet. You can eat more carbs as the phases progress. The good news is, you can eat the meats you prefer while on this diet. However, the calories you can ingest are highly regulated, and that involves a lot of list checking. Still, this diet is a good choice for quick weight loss. Keep in mind that quick weight loss does not mean long term success. (5.3)
- Jenny Craig – This diet is ranked in the top 10 for easiest diets to follow, best weight loss diets and best diets for healthy eating (based on U.S. News reviews 5.1). The diet involves a balanced diet and advertises an average weight loss of two pounds per week. It requires investment in the Jenny Craig pre-packaged meals, as the calories and portions are carefully measured for these meals. It also provides a personal consultant, support and motivation. If the budget is not a concern, this diet may be a great choice for you. (5.4)

- **Weight Watchers** – Another diet that requires monetary investment in a program, this diet is considered the best commercial diet plan, the easiest one to follow and the best for weight loss (again, this is based on U.S. News reviews). The Weight Watchers diet provides a points system and a support system. It allows you to eat what you want, but you have to be honest about what you eat and the points you accrue. Foods that fill you up and provide good calories rather than empty ones are emphasized for this diet. It is advertised to help you lose one to two pounds per week. Fruits and vegetables carry a lot of positive feedback for this diet. (5.5)
- **Slim-Fast** – This diet gets high marks for weight loss and ease of following, but it is not considered a healthy option. For those hoping to keep their weight off long term, this may not be ideal. However, if you are aiming to lose some weight for a specific event, this diet may help. For this diet, restricting the number of calories you ingest and substituting shakes or bars made by Slim Fast for certain meals can make the difference, allowing you to lose one to two pounds each week. This can be helpful for bikini season or a wedding, for example. However, it won't hold up over the long term. (5.6)
- **Paleo Diet** – This diet claims you will lead a healthier life, be more fit and avoid diseases. However, the reality, at least per U.S. News reviews, is that this diet is way outside the top 20 for weight loss, healthy eating and ease of following (average rank is 32). The diet requires you to avoid anything not eaten in the days of the caveman. Refined sugar, processed foods and even grains are eliminated from your diet. The benefits of this diet are unknown when it comes to preventing diseases. The success rate for weight loss and lower cholesterol are as yet unknown. (5.7)

The above are six different diets, most of which you may already have heard of. They are far from the only options in the diet realm, however. Start researching today to find a diet that you think you could

maintain and afford. Once you have determined which one you want to try, now is the time to work on avoiding procrastination. For both the exercise routine and the diet, make a plan to incorporate them into your daily life starting today. Advance the plan over successive days until your daily routine includes both the exercise routine and the diet so you can begin working toward results. Start Now.

Chapter 6: Starting Now with Growing a Family

If you are at a point in your life where having children appeals to you, there are a few things to do before you get down to determining when you (or your spouse) are ovulating and when to try for conception. Those little beings, once they are conceived, will need a lot of stuff to help you care for them properly. In addition to ensuring you can keep a roof over their head, feed them and clothe them, they will need a place to sleep, a car seat for transportation and a reliable daycare if both parents are going to work. If both parents aren't going to work, that is also something you need to determine ahead of time so you can plan out a budget.

Questions You Should Ask

Below are some questions to ask yourself if you feel you are at a point to begin raising a child and/or adding to the current family status.

- Why are you considering starting a family? At a certain point in life, we begin to want children by instinct. While there is nothing wrong with this, you may not actually be ready to have children. Also, you may be considering adding a new little one because your parents are pressing for grandchildren or for another reason. When considering having a child, the reason should be because you are prepared to raise another human being.
- Are you Ready? Are you prepared to commit the time and effort to a child? Do you recognize that you will need to take maternity (or paternity) leave from work? Are you ready to change your lifestyle for the next 18 years and beyond? Also, it is important to be prepared for all the possibilities, which include fertility issues, possible genetic disorders if they tend to run in the family and also the stress it will put on your relationship. Instead of simply being a couple, you will be a couple AND parents to

another being.

- What is your financial status? This will be covered in depth below. However, you also need to consider the change in expenses when you add another person to the family. Is the vehicle you drive safe and big enough to transport a child? Is there room in your home?
- What if you have twins? It could happen. Especially if there is a history of twins in your family, you need to consider whether you are prepared to have two babies at once, along with the expense and stress that can come with two tiny, demanding additions to the household (6.1)

Also, consider the fact that the routine you have now will be gone. No matter how hard you try to retain the enjoyable way you live life day-to-day, it will disappear when you add a child to the equation. It may get vastly better, and you will not be able to imagine why you enjoyed your previous routines. However, at some point you may miss what you have now. So consider whether or not you are ready to let go of the evenings that aren't filled with another person needing your constant attention. Decide if you can handle changing your regular dining out routine for family meals at home. Also, if there is a pet involved, consider how you will balance having a baby and taking care of the pet that at this current point, has all the necessary attention and probably more.

Financial Considerations

Money is a big factor in any big change to your life. When it comes to having kids, that is a huge consideration. As of 2015, the projected cost for raising a child to the age of 18 was \$304,480. This is based on a report from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (6.2)

That is a staggering amount. Now of course, that amount does not need to be saved up front. However,

if you are still saving toward a home or were planning a big purchase like a car in the near future, a large chunk of expendable income that could go toward those plans will need to be set aside for the needs of the child. That is not to say that money should be the main consideration when having a child. It is amazing the ways you can find to save money or the change in your attitude about money once that tiny person has been placed in your arms and you realize you would do ANYTHING for that little boy or girl. Still, you need to be reasonably sure you can provide the basic essentials before that little one gets here. Once conception occurs, you have about 10 months to prepare. So that does give you some time to budget and plan, even if the pregnancy is a surprise.

If you are at the point where you need to start budgeting, or you simply would like to start saving for when the little bundle of joy is about to arrive via Stork Express, consider the following tips:

- 529 Plans – These tax-advantaged savings accounts are a great way to save for a child's education. Some states require a small amount to open the account, like \$25. Others allow the account to be opened for free. Anyone can help contribute to this account, and they can take advantage of the tax benefits if they do so.
- Research What Items Can be Purchased Second-Hand – Some items, like the stroller or car seat, are best purchased brand new so as to help avoid safety issues like recalls or being sold a car seat that has been in an accident or has expired. However, baby clothes, toys and some items like a breastfeeding pillow or a Bumbo (optional but helpful item) can be purchased second-hand, where you will save money and still get an item that seems brand new. Babies grow fast, so clothes and toys tend to be under used. Then, they are not needed anymore, so they are sold cheap for some fast cash. That way, you benefit from the purchase and so does another parent. That is a win-win situation.
- Be Aware of Second-hand markets online – ThredUp and SwapMamas are great resources to be aware of. You can get great deals and spend a fraction of what you would

by heading to the big baby chain stores.

- Consider Life Insurance – Once you add another family member, the potential loss of income due to the death of a parent becomes a serious fear. To alleviate your fear and protect your loved ones, invest in life insurance. For a relatively low monthly fee, you can ensure that your family will still be able to afford to live if something sudden results in your death. While a seemingly morbid consideration, it is best to be prepared when you are responsible for someone else until they can care for themselves 18 years down the road.
- Work on a Budget – Look at what you have spent in the last few months. Consider what was necessary (bills, etc) and what was simply for pleasure (dining out, clothes or new items that were not necessities). When you have set out a budget with reasonable parameters, you can consider an amount to begin putting away in savings. Again, this is to help in case of job loss or another unexpected issue that will cost a significant amount of money (big repairs for the family vehicle, for example). (6.3)

Children are a blessing. They are a blessing that not everyone opts to include in their lives. However, if that adventure is one you think you are ready to start taking, you can Start Now with the above considerations.

The positive contributions that children make to your life can not be measured with money, time or other physical considerations. Therefore, this is a serious undertaking that can give back in ways that are unmeasurable. Be confident, however, that they are all worth it in the end.

Chapter 7: Starting Now with Starting a Business

Starting a business can be a scary undertaking. You are branching away from a job where all you had to do was show up and do what you were told to a business where you make all the decisions and will be responsible for the jobs of others when the business takes off.

Whether you plan to start a business as a part-time venture or a business that will be the main income for your family, there are things to consider before you start that will help the venture be more successful. Getting a business going is more than having a product and setting up a sign or a web page. A business involves lots of technical aspects.

10 Tips for Starting a Business

1. **Do an Honest Evaluation:** Are you sure you have what it takes to start a business? While having an idea and a business plan are important, so are the character traits that will be helpful in starting and keeping alive a new business. Are you driven, flexible and above all confident that this will succeed? These three traits are important to starting a business. Otherwise, it won't have anyone that is capable of seeing the process through, and that means a high likelihood of failure.
2. **Business Plan, Market and Budget:** Create a business plan, recognize the ideal market for your product or service and set a realistic budget for the various steps to get your business up and running. Remember to start small. There will be time to expand as the business starts gaining attention and bringing in revenue.
3. **Consider Investors:** Setting up a business takes time and elbow grease, but it will also

inevitably require some funding. If you do not have the money saved somewhere (which most people do not), you are going to need to talk to investors. When holding these conversations, keep in mind that you are talking to people who have made money so they have extra to invest in your idea. Therefore, if they have advice, listen to it. They may make the difference in the success or failure of your idea, simply based on a factor that you may never have considered. Their help can come in more than dollars and cents.

4. **Utilize All Free Resources Available:** Creating a business can take a lot of capital. Therefore, if there are resources that are available free, take advantage. Look into venues where people may be willing to share advice and where training is available at no cost to you. These areas can be invaluable to you when push comes to shove with your new business.
5. **Be Flexible:** Regardless of your original idea and the plan that you created, there will be roadblocks or a part of the plan that just does not pan out. For that reason, you need to be able to think on your feet. You also need to be willing to toss out the part that does not work and focus on the part that has potential. (7.1)
6. **Control Emotions:** Do not get angry when you aren't successful with an initial effort. Instead, talk to the consumers and see what was unappealing. Rework the idea and try again. Also, be patient. Tweaking a new idea takes time. Finally, ignore the negative people who are determined to see you fail or who simply can not grasp what you are trying to achieve. Remember that all new ideas face resistance at first.
7. **Do Not Ignore Social Media:** Today's society is all about instant results and social media provides that in a lot of ways. If you want information, you turn to social media. Therefore, when building your business, make sure to build a presence on social media at the same time. Advertising in today's world depends a lot on social media. (7.2)
8. **Network and Word of Mouth:** Both networking with others in the same business category and optimizing the gain from satisfied customers can get your business significant growth.

Do both, and use both at the same time. Your business will grow a lot faster if it is circulating in both the business world and the customer sector.

9. **Provide Quality and High Satisfaction Levels:** In the beginning, it is a good idea to over-deliver to your customers. That ensures they will become repeat customers and also that they will share their great experiences with their friends. That in turn will bring in new customers, and your business will grow. Make sure that for anyone that is not satisfied with the product or service, you resolve the issue quickly and efficiently.
10. **Hire the Right People and Delegate:** Finally, as the business grows, it is important to hire people that you can trust to keep providing the same quality of product or service. Then, work on delegating responsibilities so you can focus on other areas of the business, like creating new products or expanding in other ways.

Research the necessary licenses and other legal aspects of the business as well. Do not fail before you start by ignoring the legal aspects of creating a new business, or all your profits may be lost trying to defend yourself in a lawsuit that could have been easily avoided.

When starting a business, there are some mistakes that affect a majority of new startups. Below are some of those mistakes.

Common Business Startup Mistakes

Below are some of the most common mistakes for business startups. (7.3)

- **Losing Focus** – Starting a business takes a lot of time and effort. You can not be sidetracked easily. Likewise, the project may need adjusted. However, you still need to

make the adjustment and be focused on moving forward successfully. Too many times of changing your mind in the initial stages is a death knell for your growing business.

- **Overplanning** – It is important to create a business plan that addresses the potential issues, so you can show investors that you are prepared to deal with the unexpected. However, overplanning can lead to problems of its own. In order to be successful, you need to create a base plan and be able to think on your feet and adjust as necessary.
- **The Wrong Investors** – Despite the best intentions, sometimes you pick the wrong investor. They do not have the same vision as you, and that becomes readily apparent as things move forward. If that happens, do not panic. Do the best you can to compromise with the current investor without losing part of your vision. If compromise is impossible, work to find a new investor to buy out the one with a vastly different vision.
- **The Wrong Employees** – as mentioned above, you have to hire people that are capable of providing the same quality that you were providing as the sole employee. While having family help with a business seems like an effective cost-cutting measure, that may not be the right way to ensure your business becomes successful. Weigh the cost of hiring employees against the potential problems you can face working with family. Sometimes the expenditure is the best move.

A new business is like a child. It takes all your energy and focus initially. However, with time confidence can build, employees can be hired and the business can become a working entity that does not need your heart and soul in the day-to-day operation. Take heart in that this intense process will not take forever. Start Now and watch the idea you have grow into a profitable entity.

Chapter 8: Starting Now with a Do-It-Yourself Project

Do-It-Yourself projects save money. However, if you are not prepared to put in the time and effort to finish the project under your own steam, it may be better to budget for the hiring of a professional to complete the task.

If you are planning to Start Now and do something yourself, there are some things to consider before you jump right in.

Things to Keep in Mind if you Want to Do It Yourself:

- Have the Right Equipment – All too often, people try to do a project without gathering the right equipment first. For most home improvement projects, a certain set of tools are guaranteed to be needed. If you do not have a hammer, chances are your project is going to get held up quickly. Screwdrivers are another item that are extremely valuable to have in the home toolbox. You also should have a pencil and notebook handy for most DIY projects. Measurements are important to building or renovating or other home improvement projects, just to name one example.
- Make Sure the Idea is Clear – Know what you are getting into. Have a clear vision of the finished product. Understand that some flexibility is important, but do not let things go completely askew. You want to install a garbage disposal. Do not end up with a new garbage can instead. Likewise, if you were just planning on setting up a desk in the office, don't end up with recessed bookshelves.
- Be Safe – Consider the task and use gloves, safety glasses or whatever is necessary to

minimize your risk of injury. For crafting projects, the necessary safety equipment may be a thimble and watching how you use the scissors. Still, take an objective look at what you are doing and how to stay safe while doing it.

- Measure Twice. Cut Once – Double check what you are doing. This is a good rule of thumb no matter what type of project you are undertaking.

- Cut a Big Project into Manageable Steps – You can not build an entire house in a day.

Therefore, it is best to look at what you want to do and plan it so that you can reasonably accomplish it. Also, be sure that all materials will be protected from the elements if the project requires things to be stored outdoors over a period of more than one day. Even for projects that will be done in the home, you can not reasonably expect to tie up the dinner table for a week with materials. Instead, get out what you need for the part you can get done this evening. Store everything away when you are done and get it out again tomorrow to do the next stage. (8.1)

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DIY Websites

There are countless resources that can be found on the Internet for any DIY project you plan to tackle.

Below are a few websites that can be beneficial for beginners to the DIY world:

- Apartment Therapy – This website helps you spice up your décor on a very minimal budget. It allows for storage or a way to brighten any room in the home. The projects tend to turn out a bit fancier than anything you might find on Instructables (below), but it does not lay out the directions in quite the same detail.
- The Family Handyman – This website helps with home maintenance efforts and simple projects you may want to do yourself. It does not come without cost however, as most of the resources are locked until you pay to subscribe.
- Instructables – This website provides text instruction or handy videos to help with any craft project or anything that is home improvement-focused. The instructions are easy to follow. Others have also commented sharing tips to improve the instructions and therefore may help you with issues you face without you needing to ask for help.
- Urban Homestead – If you are looking for help growing food, preserving it or otherwise attempting to be self-sufficient, this website may be a big help to your efforts. (8.2)

Conclusion:

This book is set up to help you face obstacles to Starting Now with multiple aspects of your life. When it comes to big changes, there are going to be hurdles to get over and people that want to bury you in negativity. Even your own tendencies toward procrastination may be detrimental to your efforts. However, with some of the tips covered in this book, you can stop the downhill slide to failure and resume your climb to the thrill of success.

Start Now.

Resources:

Chapter 1

1.1 <http://zenhabits.net/best-8-ways-to-deal-with-detractors/>

Chapter 2

2.1 <http://www.forbes.com/sites/85broads/2014/04/08/why-you-should-be-writing-down-your-goals/>

Chapter 3

3.1 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/procrastination>

3.2 http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newHTE_96.htm

3.3 <http://www.webmd.com/balance/express-yourself-13/negative-self-talk?page=2>

Chapter 4

4.1 <http://beginnersinvest.about.com/od/investing101/a/how-to-start-investing.htm>

4.2 <http://beginnersinvest.about.com/od/savingsanddebtmanagement/a/how-much-should-i-be-saving.htm>

4.3 <http://blog.mint.com/goals/invest-with-little-money/>

Chapter 5

- 5.1 <http://health.usnews.com/health-news/health-wellness/articles/what-is-the-best-diet-for-you>
- 5.2 <http://health.usnews.com/best-diet/dash-diet>
- 5.3 <http://health.usnews.com/best-diet/atkins-diet>
- 5.4 <http://health.usnews.com/best-diet/jenny-craig-diet>
- 5.5 <http://health.usnews.com/best-diet/weight-watchers-diet>
- 5.6 <http://health.usnews.com/best-diet/slim-fast-diet>
- 5.7 <http://health.usnews.com/best-diet/paleo-diet>

Chapter 6

- 6.1 <http://pregnancy.familyeducation.com/trying-to-conceive/family-planning/64984.html>
- 6.2 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/08/18/cost-of-raising-a-child_n_5688179.html
- 6.3 <http://www.businessinsider.com/7-saving-tips-for-couples-starting-a-family-2012-2>

Chapter 7

- 7.1 <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/235903>
- 7.2 <http://abcnews.go.com/Business/tips-starting-small-business/story?id=14447409>
- 7.3 <https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/9-brutal-startup-mistakes-that-can-kill-your-business-and-how-to-avoid-them/>

Chapter 8

8.1 <http://www.diydoctor.org.uk/tipsstarting.htm>

8.2 <http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/my-money/2015/04/29/10-great-websites-for-diy-beginners>

Thank You!

I wanted to start off by just saying thank you for choosing to read one of my books. I know there are millions of other books out there and how valuable your time is, so I am extremely thankful that you took the time out of your day to read my book.

I wanted to also quickly explain to you that you are actually getting 6 additional books from me within this one book you purchased! I have included practically ALL of my books that I currently have available on Amazon at no additional cost to you. I wanted to give you all of these bonus books as my way of saying thank you to you!

All you need to do is go to the table of contents and you will see all of the additional books you are getting along with this one!

If you would like to go back to the table of contents and check out all of the additional books

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