

CHAPTER IV

INVEST IN YOURSELF

1. The One Hour Per Day Plan.

There is no improvement other than self improvement. No matter how circumstances around you may change, if you have not developed certain basic characteristics those changed circumstances will float past you unseen and unnoticed. Luck is when preparation meets with opportunity.

The greatest demonstration of self improvement is to be able to change adverse circumstances into opportunities. The only way to do this is to be fully prepared to meet the adverse circumstances head on. Preparing to meet adverse circumstances head on can be a frustrating and time consuming task, simply because you cannot predict with certainty what the adverse circumstances might be.

You can however, develop a mental attitude of staying motivated and optimistic at all times regardless of what the adverse circumstances might be. The important thing to remember is that you must not treat adverse circumstances as “discouragements” – and reasons to quit – but rather you must treat those adverse circumstances as “disappointments” only and make attempts to remedy the situation and move on with the task.

Recall that in Chapter 3 we suggested that you include in your schedule time for study or other self improvement. (Do not confuse this time with your "quiet-time", read that section again). This self improvement time must be taken out of every twenty-four hour period. In other words, the relevant activity must be done every day.

My practice for years, was to use one hour every morning as my self improvement time, so no matter how frustrating or time wasting my job was during the day, it really did not bother me, because I had already got my one hour of self improvement tucked away safely in my head. So far I have no regrets using this plan, and I strongly recommend it to you.

2. Keep Focused.

One of the problems you are going to face in your self improvement process is to be able to keep focused on the different stages of your development.

You might start by getting a particular State license and begin focusing on generating clients and making sales. Later you may get a second State license and still later a third license. The question is how to stay focused on the different areas of business without spreading yourself too thinly? The secret is to be able to separate the means from the end, and to focus on the end more forcefully than on the means to that end.

The different licenses are only for limited purposes. The purposes are to do a better job for the clients, generate more business and ensure your own financial independence. Do not get caught in the trap of believing that you need to become the authority in each area in which you are licensed before you begin working that license, expertise will come with practice. Neither do you need to work all the licenses simultaneously.

After you are licensed, what you learn in the field is a lot more important than what you learn from further reading. The State has already determined how much you need to know to begin doing the business that is why they issued a license to you. What you need to work on is product knowledge, people relations, self-motivation and self confidence. This experience can only come from your exposure in the field and not in your home or at the office.

The licenses only provide a means to an end, which is to do a better job for the client and to ensure your own financial independence. Focus on the end - not on the means. In doing this, remember to use your "quiet time" to maintain your integrity and professionalism.

3. Be Productive.

Every thing that we have talked about so far is to get you to the place where you become productive and happy. For the purposes of this course the word productive simply means getting the job done. Whether you are scheduling an appointment, completing a sale, training new staff, working on certain short term or long term goals, or securing your own financial independence, each goal or objective is a separate job and you need to get it done.

One of the most effective ways to manage a task is to treat it as a specific project. Set a start date, a completion date and have the objective(s) clearly visualized – preferably written down. I have learned that in making plans, sketching little diagrams and “connecting the dots” can make it a lot easier to identify defects in the plan and prevent unexpected delays.

You need to see clearly what you are planning to do, how you will do it and when you will complete it. This practice might also cause you to think whether you have the particular skills and specific knowledge to complete the task.

Productivity is an integral part of your self improvement. If you do not develop productive skills you cannot be productive, and if you are inactive or nonchalant you might never develop those skills. You may learn about them and know what they are, but they are not developed until you use them over and over.

Review your schedule on a daily basis. Stick to it and engage in productive activity every minute that the schedule calls for productive activity. If you made a good schedule, but you are sleeping during the period you scheduled for productive activity, who is going to take the blame when the job is not done?

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