

# **BASIC STEPS TO SELF-IMPROVEMENT**

## **CHAPTER 1**

### **THE DESIRE TO CHANGE**

#### **1. Where Are You Now?**

Are you completely happy with where you are in life today? Are you living in your dream home? Is your job just the thing you have always wanted? Are all your bills paid (except your mortgage)? Are you saving enough money on a regular basis so that a substantial sum will be there when you retire? Did you just return from that trip that you have been dreaming about for the last five years? Have you made adequate provision for your children's education? Are you happy with your future earning potential?

How many "yeses" did you get? None? Not one? Let's try these. Would you like to make a change? Are you prepared to do what is necessary to make a change? Are you willing to make a long term commitment for your own self improvement? Are you prepared to put aside non-productive habits so that you can spend the rest of your life being productive and happy?

If you have not answered yes to any of these questions so far, then maybe this material is not for you at this time. What are your plans for tonight? Tomorrow? Next week? Next month? Next year? Is procrastination stealing your time? Are you lamenting "If only I had done so and so last year?" or, "If only I were ten years younger?" "Or three inches taller?" Will you be saying the same things next year? Make a mental note of these words, **"My life-style will be improved only when I decide to make the changes which will result in improvement. I have great opportunity and the potential for success, but I must make the decision to change some habits before I can expect to reap any benefits"**.

#### **2. Is There Room For Improvement?**

We all have different goals, and different plans for achieving those goals. We are all motivated by different dreams and aspirations, and many of us are not happy with the hand life has dealt us. One thing that is common to all of us is that there is always room for improvement in some area of our lives. It may be spiritual, or financial, or educational, or emotional, but none of us are perfect, and we should

always try to improve and strengthen our weak areas so that we can be better equipped to maximize our potential and make our contribution to society.

We must not be afraid to examine ourselves critically and be determined to maintain the areas in which we are strong, while striving to improve the areas in which we are weak. Only by doing this critical analysis of ourselves are we going to see the need for self improvement.

Until we identify our strengths and weaknesses, and take appropriate action to maintain an even balance, we will not develop the qualities which are necessary for success. Some of us might be very good at making money, but very poor at managing that money. Others might be great with their spouse and children, but unable to maximize their earning potential.

A good starting point for this critical self-analysis is to refer to those eight questions at the beginning of this chapter, and give some serious thought to each answer. Examine each question carefully, and ask yourself if you should be answering "yes" to that question, and if so - why not?

At first the answer might appear to be quite simple - "there is not enough money to do all these things." But a deeper analysis is necessary if you are going to identify the specific areas in your life where the changes need to be made. Ask yourself, "am I living beyond my means?" or "am I earning less than I am worth?" Then ask yourself "how am I living beyond my means?" or "why am I earning less than I am worth?" The answers will surprise you and lead you to discover things about yourself which will startle you! The thing that will shock and disturb you the most is the realization that as of today, the decision rests with you, whether you will remain where you are, or whether you will begin your climb to the top of your mountain!

### **3. Develop The Desire To Change.**

Now that we understand that our lives will be improved only when we decide to change, we should not have any difficulty in developing the desire to make the change (or changes). The question is how do we maintain that desire for as long as is necessary for the changes to take effect? Some changes might appear to be fixed in terms of time. For example, three to six months to complete an academic course or obtain a State license to do a particular business. But we need to realize that the desire to make changes should not be seen as a temporary short-term exercise, but

rather as steps in a lifetime commitment to self improvement, and that each change we make is only one more step in our climb to the top.

Those of us who are totally committed to a lifetime of self improvement will remain committed to the very last moment, and will therefore never lose the desire to make whatever changes are necessary to achieve our end.

We must never lose sight of the fact that the changes are merely a means to an end. They are short term goals (or spurts) which form a pattern of long term activity. This actually provides the momentum which propels us from one level of success to another, and gives us the assurance that we will never remain below the level we were at yesterday. We may slip and fall below the level we were yesterday, but that is not where we belong, we belong at the highest level we have attained and we must do all we can to move forward from that level.

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Chapter 2 follows next week.