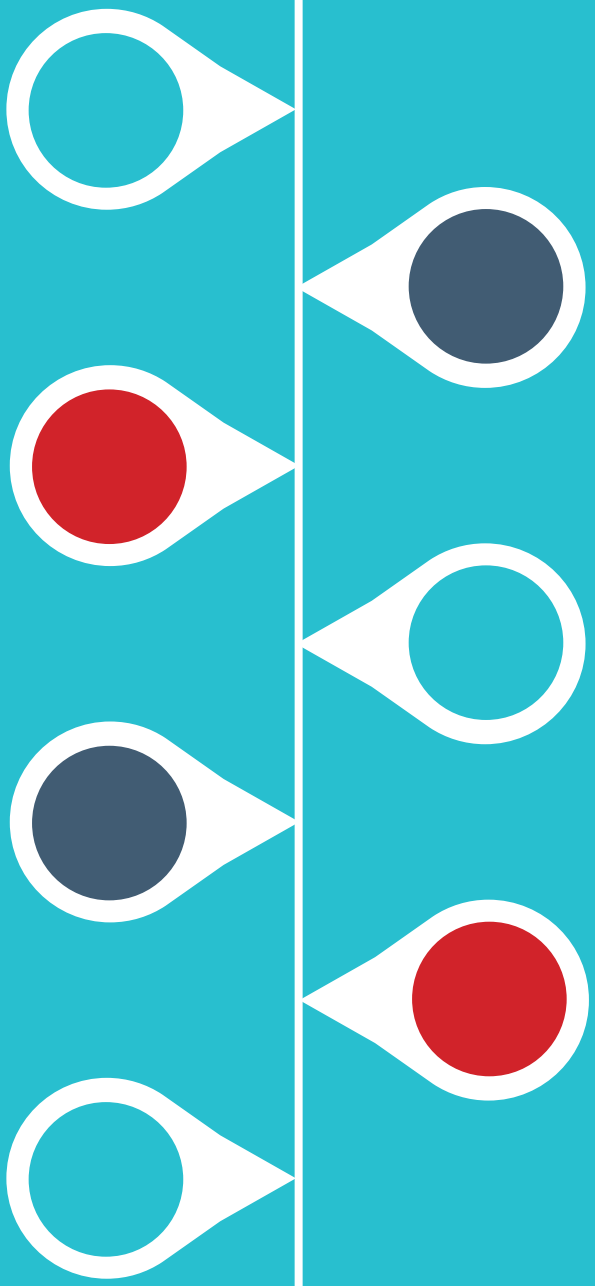


7 STEPS

to Achieving Your Biggest Dreams

Table of Contents

Step # 1 *Correct Your Mindset* 1

Step #2 *Create Your Vision* 6

Step #3 *Set SMART Goals for Yourself* 8

Step #4 *Take Decisive and Immediate Action* 16

Step #5 *Keep Everything Simple and Straightforward* 17

Step #6 *Change Your Environment* 18

Step #7 *Take Personal Responsibility* 19

STEP #1

Correct Your Mindset

"If you think you can or think you can't, you're right either way."

—HENRY FORD

Eliminate any self-limiting beliefs and create the habit of replacing them with empowered beliefs. Negative self-talk can be paralyzing and is one of the biggest—if not *the* biggest—blocks to achieving great success. Its power is far reaching and can keep you from fulfilling the greatness that you were created to accomplish.

In 1957, Earl Nightingale, author, speaker, and co-founder of the Nightingale-Conant Corporation, recorded his classic motivational record, *The Strangest Secret*. It sold over one-million copies and made history in the recording industry by being honored as the first Gold Record for the spoken word. Nightingale, known as the "Dean of Personal Development," concluded that life's "strangest secret" is that we become what we think about.

Your belief system, like your computer, doesn't judge or even question what you input; it merely accepts your thoughts as truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Think thoughts of failure or defeat and you're bound to feel down and discouraged. Continuous thoughts of worry, fear, and anxiety are unhealthy and often manifest in the body as stress, depression, and can even result in experiencing panic attacks.

At the core of Nightingale's message, he reveals the incredible power of belief, expectation, and positive self-talk. What you vividly imagine and hold in your subconscious mind begins to be pictured as your reality. Your belief system not only defines your reality, but it also shapes your character and determines your potential. As Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Believe you can and you're halfway there."

A good way to create positive self-talk is through affirmations. An affirmation is a positive statement that represents your desired condition or outcome. Interestingly enough, your subconscious mind doesn't know the difference between a real experience and vividly imagined "mental" experience.

Throughout history, there have been well-known examples of individuals who used affirmations to go on to accomplish greatness in their lives. One well-known example would be of a young boy by the name of Cassius Marcellus Clay. While growing up in Louisville, Kentucky, the twelve-year-old boy dreamed of someday becoming the heavyweight boxing champion of the world. When working out in the gym, he would continuously affirm to all within earshot that he was indeed the greatest boxer of all time. Muhammad Ali used his affirmation to become the undisputed heavyweight boxing champion of the world, and arguably one of the most popular and recognized sports figures to ever live.

In order for a positive affirmation to be effective, the affirmation must be:

1. Simple, encouraging, and stated in the present tense. Your subconscious mind works in the present tense. Avoid words such as will, should, or could.
2. Stated aloud.
3. Spoken in a positive manner with the focus on what you want.
4. Said with strong emotion and conviction.
5. Repeatedly said over and over.

In my award-winning book, *Selling Simplified*, I recommend readers should identify any self-limiting beliefs and bring them to the surface. First, discover the origins of those self-limiting beliefs and pull them out by the roots, like pulling weeds. Then, replace those self-limiting beliefs with empowered beliefs.

YOUR BELIEF SYSTEM

A **belief system** is nothing more than a series of thoughts you've repeated over and over—regardless of whether it's true or not.

Beliefs
↓
Expectations
↓
Actions
↓
Results

EXERCISE

Use the following Beliefs Worksheet to get started with replacing your self-limiting beliefs with empowered beliefs.

You have two columns. The left-hand column is titled "My Self-Limiting Beliefs." The right-hand column is titled "My Empowered Beliefs." This next part requires that you become a detailed detective and search inside yourself as to what self-limiting beliefs you need to reprogram. Realize that self-limiting beliefs are not facts; they're just beliefs. They can be changed at any time.

An example of a popular self-limiting belief is: "I can't reach my financial goals because of the economy." This statement would belong in the left-hand column.

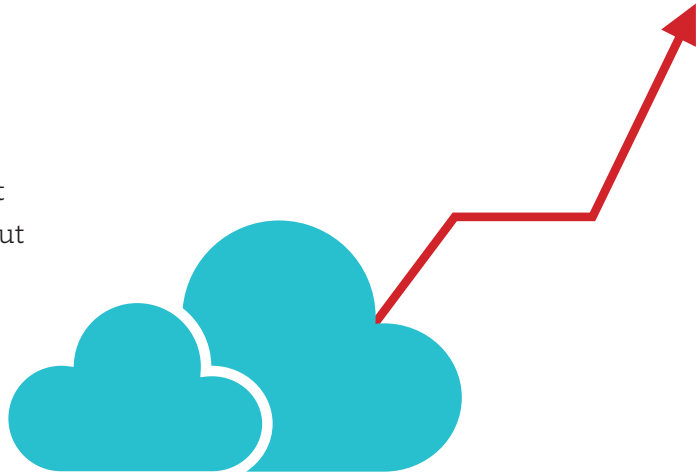
Once you've done that, go to the right-hand column and for every self-limiting belief you've written, write down an empowered belief for that same item. An example of an empowered belief to that self-limiting belief would be: "I am in control of my success."

After completing both columns, completely destroy the left-hand column. Tear it up or mark it out with a pen. It is your old way of thinking and there is no need to keep it. This is not for bragging about your own abilities, nor is it merely about a self-help technique. This is about changing your thought process. It is about thinking in a way that will allow you to overcome and achieve.

It has been said that it takes twenty-one days to create a new habit. So, right now, commit to making a big change to your thinking and embrace it. Place the right-hand side of your sheet on your nightstand so it is the first and last thing you read over every day. Say every empowered belief aloud first thing in the morning, and again prior to going to bed. It is important to hear those words come from your own lips.

A famous quote by Lao Tzu says, "Watch your thoughts; they become words. Watch your words; for they become actions. Watch your actions; they become habit. Watch your habits; they become character. Watch your character; it becomes your destiny."

Now that you are thinking differently, be aware that old ways will try to creep back. Every time an obstacle comes up, speak one very important word to the situation, "Stop!" Take a deep breath and begin speaking an empowered belief immediately. When you extinguish the programming that limits your performance, the sky is the limit!



BELIEFS LIST

Negative Language: I can't. I want or I wish. It's hard.	*Empowered Choices:* I can. I choose. It is a challenge.
Self-limiting beliefs about yourself: I'm not good enough. I'm not smart enough. I need to be perfect to be okay. I don't have what it takes.	*Empowered beliefs about yourself:* I am more than good enough. I have all that it takes to succeed. I am perfectly imperfect like everyone else. I easily accomplish anything that I set my mind to do.
Self-limiting beliefs about prospecting: I'm bothering people.	*Empowered beliefs about prospecting:* I am helping people.
Self-limiting belief about showing homes: I have to go show homes. I have to go show homes at 5 p.m. today.	*Empowered beliefs about showing homes:* I am going to go sell a home. I am getting to show homes at 5 p.m. today.
Self-limiting beliefs about money: I can't afford it. There is never enough money. I don't deserve an abundance of money.	*Empowered beliefs about money:* I can't afford it yet. There's always an abundance of money. I deserve an abundance of prosperity.

Self-limiting belief about success:
If I am successful, I will have to work long, hard hours, struggle, and sacrifice.
Pro-success belief:
I achieve success by working smarter, not harder.

Self-limiting belief about success:
If I am successful, I will be overwhelmed.
Pro-success belief:
I create success with ease.

Self-limiting belief about success:
If I am successful, I won't have time for myself, my friends, or my family.
Pro-success belief:
I enjoy being successful and having time for myself, my friends, and my family.

My Self-Limiting Beliefs	My Empowered Beliefs

STEP #2

Create Your Vision

"We are limited, not by our abilities, but by our vision."

–UNKNOWN

In business, it's not enough to simply have a great idea, product, or service and then hope that success will find its way to you. Successful businesses are built around a vision or purpose. It's what drives those within the business to set out on a mission to achieve that purpose.

Because success is individualized, you must create your own vision of what success means to you. Your definition of "the good life" may be very different from someone else's vision of what your life should look like. Yet the underlying steps toward that end are the same. Success is about how it looks to you, how it works, how it feels, and how it represents the fulfillment of goals pursued.

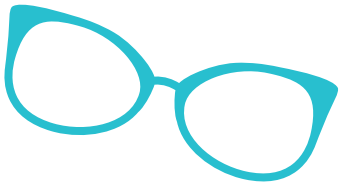
Picture your idea of success in great detail; describe what you will be doing, where you will live, what your income will be, and everything that will be different from what it is today. If you get in your car with gas in the tank and air in the tires, what good does it do if you have no idea where you are going? You have got to know your destination.

Now, here's the clincher! Share your vision, especially if others are needed to move your goals forward. But use care when confiding in others. As the Bible says, "Don't waste what is holy on people who are unholy. Don't throw your pearls to pigs! They will trample the pearls, then turn and attack you" (Matthew 7:6 NLT). This means be careful who you share your vision with because they could discourage you or give negative feedback while you could most likely use encouragement and positivity.

With those you trust, explain where you are going, how you plan on getting

there, and describe the resources needed along the way. Many times, people would love to get involved in one way or another. Typically, they don't because they don't know how to help or how to get involved. So, spread the word and be direct about where you are going and how you are getting there. Plus, you never know who knows who. Have you ever heard: It's not *what* you know, it's *who* you know? That's where that principle comes in. Apply it in reaching for your success.

EXERCISE



Make a list of three trusted individuals who could be of value as you share your vision.

1.

2.

3.

STEP #3

Set SMART Goals for Yourself

"A goal is a dream with a deadline."

–NAPOLEON HILL

Once you have a vision, you need a plan of action. Think of it like the list of directions that tell you how far to go before making a left or right turn. By setting goals that are Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound you are ensuring the needed clarity of your goals, which allows you to measure and track the results.

I once heard someone say, "Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into the visible." When you wake up each morning with your goals clearly outlined, it gives you a daily purpose and direction. This practice has been a powerful tool for me and it can help you accomplish things you never thought possible.

Years ago, I read a powerful quote about the future: "Destiny is not a matter of chance, it's a matter of choice." The choice to implement the techniques and tools shared in this lesson can be the beginning of being intentional about success. After all, success won't happen by accident. But it most certainly starts with the choice to move forward.

Many individuals and even businesses—small and large—go about setting goals and achieving them the wrong way. In fact, it's easy to get goal setting wrong because learning to set goals is a skill that few are ever taught. So, let's cover the details behind setting your goals.

In Brian Tracy's book, *Goals—How to Get Everything You Want Faster than You Ever Thought Possible*, he claims that "less than 3% of adults have clear written goals with plans on how to achieve them." The key here is *written* goals. Additionally, you are 80 percent more likely to reach your goals when they are written.

Although goal setting wasn't necessarily a new concept in the 1960s, this is when Dr. Edwin Locke, an American psychologist and researcher, began to formally examine the relationship between motivation and the setting of goals. In 1968, he published his findings titled, *Toward a Theory of Task Motivation and Incentives*. Locke's research led to some interesting results:

1. Having goals leads to an overall improvement in individual performance.
2. There is a relationship between how difficult and specific a goal is and people's performance of a task. Specific and difficult goals are more motivating than vague or easy goals.
3. When people are given positive feedback, both during and after taking action on their goals, it leads them to achieve even more.

Telling someone to "Try hard" or "Do your best" is less effective than "Try to get more than 80 percent correct" or "Concentrate on beating your best time." Likewise, having a goal that's too easy is not a motivating force. Hard goals are more motivating than easy goals because it's much more of an accomplishment to achieve something that you have to work for.

A few years after Locke published his article, another American researcher, Dr. Gary Latham, studied the effect of goal setting in the workplace. His findings supported Doctor Locke's conclusions, and the fundamental link between being effective at work and goal setting was formed.

In 1990, Locke and Latham published their groundbreaking work, *A Theory of Goal Setting and Task Performance*. In this book, they identified five principles that lie behind effective goal setting. These five principles are: clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and task complexity.

Here is a summary of the Five Principals of Effective Goal Setting:

1. CLARITY

A clear goal is one that can be measured. Goals should be very explicit regarding what behavior is desired and will be rewarded. When you use the SMART acronym to help you set goals, you ensure the clarity of the goal. The SMART acronym stands for:

S = Specific
M = Measureable
A = Achievable
R = Relevant
T = Time-Bound

2. CHALLENGE

If we know that a goal is a challenge and that it is also perceived as such by those who assigned it to us, we are more likely to be motivated to achieve it. Of course, there is a balance to be struck with this principle. A goal should be challenging, but must still be achievable.

3. COMMITMENT

Goals take determination, hard work, and focus. With that said, there must be a high level of commitment to see them through to the end. When working as part of a team, they need to be agreed upon in order to be effective. Everyone involved must both be committed to using the resources needed to complete the goal, and should also agree on what the reward will be.

4. FEEDBACK

What if the person is halfway to completing the goal but they have a question? What if you suspect that the person is going about the process of completing the goal in the wrong way? Feedback is a chance to correct or clarify before the goal has been reached.

5. COMPLEXITY

Even the most motivated person can become discouraged if the complexity of the task and the time it would take to complete it isn't fully understood. It is important to make sure that the person has enough time to reach the goal. Unreasonable time expectations will drive a person to become overwhelmed with work and become less effective as the stress level increases.

SMART GOAL SETTING

Goal setting is crucial to the success of any business, but it is particularly important for entrepreneurs who can become distracted without focus. Goals direct actions, give you something to aim for, and can serve as a yardstick for measuring your business's success. However, there is a right way and a wrong way to set goals.

S = Specific

Great goals are well defined and state exactly what you want to accomplish, which leads to a much greater chance of them being accomplished than general goals. When a goal is vague—or when it's expressed as a general instruction, like "Take initiative" or "Increase my sales"—it has limited motivational value. Make sure to include deadlines with real numbers. Examples of goals would be:

Vague Goal: Work on getting more listings.

Clear Goal: Increase number of listings taken by 15 percent by November 15th.

Vague Goal: Respond to online leads.

Clear Goal: Call all online leads within 10 minutes to increase capture rate 25 percent by December 31st.

An additional point about focus is that it creates a powerful force referred to as goal power. The moment you focus on a goal, your goal becomes a magnet, pulling you and your resources toward it. The more focused your energies, the more power you generate.

Clear goals are:

1. Easy to understand
2. Leave no room for assumptions
3. Motivating
4. Achievable
5. Easy to reward

Vague goals are:

1. Difficult to understand
2. Leave room for assumptions
3. Not motivating
4. Difficult to achieve
5. Unlikely to be rewarded and can lead to disappointment

M = Measureable

A goal that is measureable allows you to track your goal, stay on track, reach target dates, and experience the excitement of achievement that spurs you on to the continued effort required to reach your goal. A goal without a measurable outcome is like a sports competition without a scoreboard or scorekeeper. Numbers are an essential part of business. Put concrete numbers in your goals to know if you're on track. Measureable goals include how much, how many, and any other defining measurements that will let you know when it has been accomplished.

A = Achievable

Goals need to be challenging, optimistic, and a bit of a stretch, while being realistic enough to achieve the desired outcome. Far too often, small businesses can set goals beyond reach. No one has ever built a billion-dollar business overnight. If you aim too high, you're dooming yourself to defeat. Dream big and aim for the stars but keep one foot firmly based in reality.

When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways to make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

You can attain most any goal you set when you plan your steps wisely and establish a timeframe that allows you to carry out those steps. Goals that may have seemed out of reach eventually move closer and become attainable, not because your goals shrink, but because you grow and expand to match them. When you list your goals, you build your self-image. You see yourself as worthy of these goals, and develop the traits and personality that allow you to possess them.

On the other hand, some entrepreneurs set goals that are too easily attained. If you tend to do this, look for ways to challenge yourself. If you usually aim to add one new listing every week, push yourself to shoot for two or three.

R = Relevant

Goals should help you attain a specific aim. Achievable business goals are based on the current conditions and realities of the business climate. Look at how the goal ties into your key responsibilities and how it is aligned to your objectives. You may desire to have your best year in business or increase revenue by 50 percent, but if a recession is looming, then your goals aren't relevant to the realities of the market.

Look out for goals that are just there to keep you busy, but are not appropriate to the overall success of your business. If you don't believe your goals are worthwhile, you won't make the necessary effort to achieve them.

T = Time-Bound

Business goals and objectives require a timeframe, dates, and frequency to be tied to goals. Without one or more of these, there's no sense of urgency. Pushing toward "someday" is not an effective way to get where you are trying to go. If you want to create a list of SMART goals, when do you want to complete it by? "Someday" won't work. But if you anchor it within a timeframe—"by October 31st"—then you've set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal of getting the list complete.

SMART GOAL SAMPLE

So what does a smart goal look like? Based on the acronym, our example would state:

"Obtain $1 million dollars closed volume by the end of this fiscal year through contacting my Mets and Unmets database."

Once your business goals are SMART, break down each goal into a specific set of tasks and activities to accomplish your goals. At this point, you'll need focus. Champions are famous for concentrating their energy and efforts on what they want and blocking out anything or anyone who threatens that focus. While average people unsystematically pursue loosely defined goals, champions concentrate on the fulfillment of a singular purpose with an intensity that borders on obsession.

There is a famous quote by David Fincher, an American film director, that's always led me to ponder the level of commitment others really have, compared to what they want to achieve in life. He says, "My idea of professionalism is probably a lot of people's idea of obsessive." Personally, if I had to be indifferent or obsessive—I'd choose obsessive any day.

It's important to periodically review all your goals, make adjustments if necessary, and take time to celebrate accomplishments. Goal setting is fundamental to achievement, making it an essential tool to success for your small business.

One final word: Goals are the fuel for a satisfying life—both professionally and personally. When setting goals for your business, remember to include personal goals as well. You and your family will be very thankful that you did!

So, let's list exactly why setting SMART goals is undoubtedly one of the best things you can do for yourself. By setting SMART goals, it:

1. Shifts you to clearly knowing what you really want and stops the vague "wishes," "shoulds," and "coulds" of your life.
2. Teaches you to begin your thinking by asking yourself what you really want.
3. Provides a framework of simple but powerful questions to assist you in determining what is important to you.
4. Gets you asking yourself the questions that successful people ask themselves.
5. Focuses your mind on what's important to you by concentrating on your list.
6. Provides the motivation to accomplish your goals.
7. Increases your chances of achieving what really matters to you.

8. Engages your subconscious to help you achieve your goals, now that it knows what you want to accomplish.
9. Helps you to seek out new knowledge and develop new skills to do things you have never done before.
10. Assists you in getting much more out of life.
11. Builds new beliefs in yourself when you begin to realize how much is possible.

GOALS VERSUS OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives are typically used interchangeably. However, they are different and it is important to know the difference.

A **Goal** is defined by *Merriam-Webster* as: The end toward which effort is directed.

Goals are:

- Primary and important
- Large in size
- The destination
- The whole
- Longer term

SMART thinking *always* applies here.

An **Objective** is defined by *Merriam-Webster* as: Something toward which effort is directed. Objectives are the ways you plan to achieve your primary goal. They are the sub-goals of your goal and may vary in scale. Some may be simple actions and others may be complex. Like goals, your objectives need to be SMART as well.

Objectives are:

- Sub-goals
- Small or medium in size
- The steps
- Part of the whole
- Shorter term

SMART thinking *may* apply here.

For example, your goal is to set up your own website. Your objectives could be to purchase a domain name, register the domain name, hire someone to design the

EXERCISE

Use the following SMART Goal Setting Plan template to get started with creating your own SMART goals.

Goal:		**Today's Date:** **Completion Date:**		
Objective: (what needs to be done)	Measurement of Task Completion	Resources Needed (People/Time/Money)	Target Date	Completion Date

STEP #4

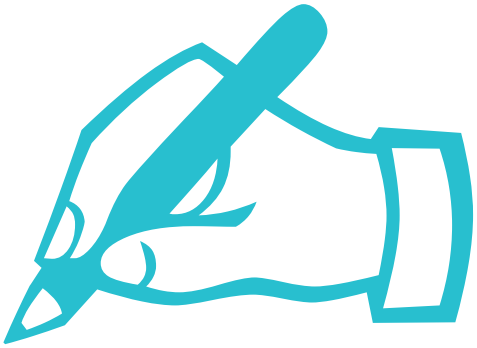
Take Decisive and Immediate Action

"Even if you are on the right track, you'll never run if you just sit there."

—WILL ROGERS

Achieving success is not about dreaming; it is all about taking action. A common misconception is that successful people somehow have superpowers. The reality is that successful individuals are really good at committing goals to writing and taking immediate action. Have a do-whatever-it-takes attitude. As your goals list is created, you've got to commit to doing whatever is necessary to achieve the success you desire.

Don't try to get there overnight. Rome wasn't built in a day and reaching your goals will not be accomplished in a day either. A word of caution: Don't miss today's opportunity by looking for tomorrow's target. Sure, stay focused on the goals at hand but take it day-by-day. Enjoy and live today to its fullest while keeping your eye on your future.



STEP #5

Keep Everything Simple and Straightforward

"If you can't explain it to a six-year-old, you don't understand it yourself."

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

Since simplicity breeds success, you should aim to keep everything simple and straightforward. For example, if a system is simple to follow, the higher the odds are of everyone sticking to the system. So, when creating systems or products, take time to evaluate them and ask yourself, "How can this be as simple as possible?" Look for ways to make it easy so you can stick to what is being created.

We live in a world where we are inundated with thousands of messages every day from all directions. Today, when you compose an email, send a text, or post a message to a social media site—keep it simple, short, relevant, and to the point. Nothing initially needs three paragraphs of explanation and background. None of us have time to read it.

The theory of Occam's Razor states that, when faced with competing ideas that lead to the same outcome, go with the simpler one. The stories of Apple, Facebook, and Google are great examples of this.

STEP #6

Change Your Environment

"Sometimes in the winds of change, we find our true direction."

—UNKNOWN

You will not be able to develop a new you if you don't make some changes in your surroundings. This includes the people you spend your most valuable asset with—your time. Find someone—a mentor, coach, consultant, an expert, or professional—to assist you in reaching your desired outcome. The right person can offer a third-party perspective, providing necessary guidance, accountability, and expertise.

Spend time with those who can help you get where you want to be and with those who are where you want to be. Typically, those same people consistently have a positive outlook and speak life into you and your dreams.

Many times, when doing something new, you will need to surround yourself with people who can believe *for* you, or at the very least, you will need those who stand by your side to believe *with* you.

STEP #7

Take Personal Responsibility

"If you could kick the person in the pants responsible for most of your trouble, you wouldn't sit for a month."

—THEODORE ROOSEVELT

The most damaging force against dreams is an excuse. Excuses are dream destroyers and can halt any and all progress at any given time. They are sometimes used as a crutch so someone doesn't have to take a step of faith by trying something new—ultimately risking failure. Excuses are not to be underestimated. They can be very effective and have the ability to stop you dead in your tracks, sabotaging your future by keeping you from reaching your fullest potential.

Take personal responsibility for your own success. Give up the excuses, blaming circumstances or others for what happens in your life. Understand that your life is currently a composite of all the choices you have made—not what has happened *to you*. The past is the past. If you don't like where you are, realize and accept responsibility that you need to make better choices today and in the future.

Yes, sometimes things go wrong. It happens. But instead of wallowing in frustration, determine what went wrong so you can keep it from happening again. Apologize if need be or correct whatever can be corrected by doing whatever it takes to move on. Then, move forward and do better next time.