

Personal Eco-Systems™:

Creating Systems for Automatic Success!

By

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Foreward:

Understanding Your Personal Environment

Anyone who has watched children magically transform when visiting Grandparents knows how powerfully the environment impacts our behavior. We are quite literally a “different person” depending on the circumstances.

At work, we behave, think, and feel in certain ways, but when we get home, it's as if another person takes over our body. We laugh at different things, we focus on different priorities, we even walk, sit and use our body differently. Couples often joke about the differences between the people who met and were eager to impress each other, compared to the couple who dated and built a sense of intimacy over the years. Sometimes we discover that someone “new” has shown up, and the relationship is transformed by the experience of sharing our lives and homes together day by day.

Our environment shapes and molds us. Obviously, the “heart and soul” deep inside each one of us remains largely constant. As we discover our unchanging values and personal character, there is a sense of stability, a sense of being “ourselves”. But even late in life, we often observe dramatic changes between the way we are at home and in public. It's as if we “put on” the personality that is best suited to the circumstances.

This amazing, chameleon-like ability can be used to our advantage, and successful people have always known this. At some level, athletes understand the power of surrounding themselves with images and symbols of success. The best athletes don't train a couple hours per day and ignore their sport the rest of the time. No!

Great athletes study movies of their heroes. They read biographies, watch competitions on television, they “hang out” with fellow athletes, and they eat, sleep and breath their sport. They create powerful environmental cues to keep themselves focused and sharp.

Successful people in every area of life do something similar.

Most of us are familiar with the images of high-powered executives arriving for an important meeting in their limousines, perhaps surrounded by assistants, dressed in well-tailored suits, and carrying the “aura” of authority, prestige and leadership. Now a question: Which came first, the success, or the environment that makes success possible?

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

- Aristotle

I would argue that success is the predictable result of creating situations in which success is most likely to occur. Achieving real and long-lasting success requires superior productivity. It is one thing to win a lottery or find some fleeting fame. Some of us will inherit wealth and be able to buy limousines or other trappings that look much like “success”, but simply surrounding ourselves with luxury items is not a true indication of success. Ask any of those who have suddenly come into great wealth, only to experience the pain of failing to manage and use it wisely.

Highly successful people create success on purpose. They study expert performance, they learn from the best and the brightest. They work hard. They study their mistakes and make changes. They focus and they get very good at what they do.

Now, admittedly, a small number of highly successful people achieve their superior performance in one of two unusual ways. A few are “born lucky” – the Tiger Woods and Michael Jordons of this world appear to be born with incredible genetic talents that, when honed through years of hard work, great coaching and tremendous dedication, allow them to achieve world-record performance.

And second, there are an even smaller number of people who have the good fortune to get “in the way of” success and are carried along by circumstances. A few are able to achieve relative success by learning from and following the footsteps of a mentor or a family elder who opens the doors, shows them the way, and encourages their careers.

Most of us, however, will have to create our own success. Whether our priorities are to build a business, write a novel, or to be the best high school biology teacher, we will have to master the techniques and practice the skills of peak performance on our own. How can we best accomplish this?

Again, to be honest, there are a few dedicated individuals who can do it through raw will power. They have a level of personal discipline, determination, and a fire in the belly, a hunger or a passion, that is sufficient to drive them forward. It gets them up early, it pushes them all day long, and if they are smart and talented and work hard, their hunger will achieve a high level of success.

There is an easier way, however. We can learn to create and use the environment to our advantage. We can create circumstances that seem to “automatically” pull us forward. We can create our own “luck” and surround ourselves with environmental cues that encourage us to both learn and to utilize the skills and techniques of peak performers. If we do that, if we perform as well or better than those who have already achieved remarkable success, it makes sense that we, too, will eventually be recognized as having that same level of success.

"You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. What you will discover will be wonderful. What you will discover will be yourself."

—Alan Alda

This is not surprising. Put a teenager in a room with the boy or girl of their dreams, and watch their behavior. Put a salesperson in a room with a likely and highly desired prospect, and watch their behavior. We all respond to appropriate cues! The trick is to use this reality on purpose and to our advantage.

That is the theme and focus of this short ebook.

Highly successful people learn to arrange the people, places and things in their environment, along with their schedules, to maximize their success. What does this mean? Let's use a simple example of wanting to lose 10 pounds while becoming somewhat more fit.

Lots of people have this goal and there are many ways to achieve that level of success. Some go to a "spa", where their diet will be strictly monitored, and exercise, massage and fitness sessions will be added to their daily schedule. This is a classic example of modifying their Personal Eco-System™ to achieve at least short-term success. By taking themselves out of their usual environment, which may be filled with various stressors and temptations to eat ice cream, candy or other "fat foods", they have created a temporary Personal Eco-System™ to lose the weight. The problem occurs when they return to their traditional environment at home.

Another strategy for losing the weight is to put pictures of obese or unhealthy people on the refrigerator door, in the hope that the pictures will be repulsive enough to prevent over-eating. While this unfortunate strategy rarely works, it is an attempt to create a Personal Eco-System™ with a specific goal in mind.

Probably a better, and longer-lasting strategy is to design a Personal Eco-System™ that includes photographs of fit, energetic people participating in sports they enjoy and celebrating their health. Beyond these pictures, some people might add bowls of fresh fruit or vegetables on the kitchen counter, and attractive salads and their favorite fish, chicken or vegetarian meals in the refrigerator, while eliminating chips, cookies and candy. If there are no chips in the house, and the bowl on the counter is filled with tempting oranges, apples and fresh Bing cherries, the odds of going to the store just to buy potato chips goes way down.

We can intentionally and thoughtfully design Personal Eco-Systems™ to enhance our performance and increase our chances for success in almost any endeavor. Want to spend less and invest more? Join an investment club, subscribe to and read magazines about managing your personal finances, encourage your friends and family to talk about saving and to question every expense. Design a personal budget and put it where it will remind you of your goals every day. Surround yourself with information and support to reach your goal. Design a complete Personal Eco-System™ that encourages the benefits of saving and that discourages splurging. It's as simple, as powerful, and as complex as that.

"We must either
find a way, or
make one."

- Hannibal

We all design and create Personal Eco-Systems™ all the time. One person puts CD's of rock music in their car, and has a walkman in their briefcase. Another, listens to motivational tapes, while someone else prefers the "sounds of silence". Our personal choices are reflected in the environment we create for ourselves every day.

The following articles are designed to help you do this intentionally and consistently over time, in ways that support you in achieving your most important goals.

For now, however, stop reading and take a moment to look around you. If you are reading this in your office or family room, notice all the things that reflect you and your personal priorities. Notice how many of the furnishings reflect your personal preferences, even if you may not have chosen all of them directly. (Your office may have been painted before you moved in, for instance.) Is the space clean, or cluttered? Are there books, magazines or music that enhance your life? Are there photographs of your favorite places, or places you will visit on your next vacation?

"I am only one;
but still I am one.
I cannot do
everything,
but still I can do
something. I will
not refuse to do
the something I
can do."

- Helen Keller

Do you have a list of your most important goals posted where you will see it every morning and every evening? If you are seated, does the chair fit you and support you comfortably? If your mother walked in right now, would she be pleased by what she saw? Are you proud of the space around you? Is it clean, neat, pleasant and fun?

These are important questions because most of the things in your environment can be changed or modified to create a wonderfully invigorating space that will make you extremely productive. Think about walking into a clean office, furnished with a nice desk and a chair that fits you "just right". Imagine being surrounded by the music that makes you most productive, while having pictures of your loved ones encouraging you all day long.

These are the things that highly successful people do. They "dress for success". They read useful books and listen to inspiring tapes. They walk and talk like the people they want to become. They insist on time alone to focus, while also taking time to be with and to learn from people who can teach them, lead them, and encourage them. They do not tolerate "friction". They create Personal Eco-Systems™ that reflect their values, their priorities, and their most important goals.

You can do the same, and the following pages can help. Here's to your success!

Philip E. Humbert, PhD
April, 2001

Chapter 1:

Your Personal Eco-System™

As long-time subscribers know, I've spent over 25 years looking for the answer to one major question: How do highly successful people create the lives they really want, while others fail?

In recent weeks, I have discovered a huge key that can be summarized in the concept of a "Personal Eco-System"™, a phrase I expect to write about, teach, and expand for many years to come. I may not have all the pieces of the puzzle, but this is a *huge* one!

Highly successful people - defined as people who create the lives they really want - manage their environment so that success comes easily and is a natural result of their daily activities.

Most of us spend our days surrounded by the people, things, schedules, demands and errands that "happen" to us, even if they are inconsistent with our dreams. Sometimes, even our closest relationships undermine us, rather than supporting us.

Highly successful people don't live that way.

For example, thousands of people dream of writing a novel, and they work on it in their "spare" time. They think about it and dream about it, but refuse to let the novel interrupt their work, their family, or their daily schedule. Since they've never written a novel, it seems silly to disrupt life for a distant dream.

Fortunately, Stephen King didn't do it that way. As he says in, "On Writing", he did work as a teacher. He did have a family. He did have a life. And every evening, and every weekend, and every lunch hour, he wrote. He arranged his life, his family, and his work so that those things supported his dream, rather than interfering with it. *That* is the critical distinction!

To achieve your dreams, you must create a system – a "Personal Eco-System"™ - that makes it easier to write than to not write. You must create a system that makes it easier to save than to spend, or to exercise than to not exercise. Whatever your dream, the key is a support system that pushes, pulls and "makes" you do what you want to do, even on your worst days.

Here are a few keys:

"We cannot discover new oceans until we have the courage to lose sight of the shore."

- Muriel Chen

1. Clarity. Decide what you want. Name it. Describe it, list it, and tell the world about it. You will never develop a great life from a vague, fuzzy dream. Get clear.

2. Space. Create an environment that is "yours". Move the furniture, get rid of the clutter, paint the walls, and create space that excites you and "demands" that you pursue your dreams.

3. Time. Nobody is "too busy". We all have 24-hours and we all have "stuff" that gets in the way. Eliminate what doesn't fit, add more of what drives you forward. It's hard; do it anyway.

4. Distractions. Successful people don't permit frustrations to get in their way. If you need to repair, replace, or adjust some of the "things" in your life, do so. Clean up your nest.

5. People. Surround yourself with people who encourage, support, and help you get there. You may hire a Professional Coach, but we *all* need lots of coaches (with a small "c") who encourage us every day.

"You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don't try."

--Beverly Sills

I am not convinced that written goals are sufficient to guarantee your success. Of course written goals are vital, and I recommend that you take time for clarity. But highly successful people go beyond goal-setting to create "Personal Eco-Systems"™ that propel them quickly and inevitably toward their goals.

Surround yourself with the space and the time for success. Clean up your nest and eliminate the distractions that waste your energy and your life. And get yourself a bunch of coaches who know where you're going and will cheer you, and help you, every step of the way. Make this your best year ever! Create a system that guarantees it!

Chapter 2:

Guaranteed Success in The New Year

In December or early January, almost everyone is struck by the desire to plan a wonderful new year! We plan vacations, and we imagine that any goal can be achieved by October, it seems so far away. We eagerly make New Year's Resolutions and set our biggest goals ever!

The unfortunate reality, of course, is that for most people the year goes by with little change. We do our jobs and live our lives, but our dreams don't come true. Some things do change, but life doesn't seem all that different. Not really. Not like we hoped.

What went wrong? What always goes wrong?

After working with thousands of people, and going through that experience in my own life, I think I have at least some of the answers. If you would really like to have more fun in two-thousand-and-one, let me suggest the following steps:

1. You must set goals. Many people try to skip this part. They have failed to reach their goals in the past, and have grown discouraged. Trust me, setting goals is essential!

Too many people have taken too many "goal setting workshops" that didn't work out, but that is no excuse to ignore this essential step. Begin by deciding what you want!

At this point in workshops, someone always raises their hand and asks, "What if I don't know what I want?" My answer is that I've never met a person who didn't know what they want; I've only met people who weren't willing to admit it to themselves. On a practical level, tell the truth and start small, but decide what will make you happy, say it out loud, and write it down!

Don't skip this step!

2. Next, acknowledge the price, and decide to pay it. Any worthwhile human achievement requires sacrifice, risk, effort and perseverance. Of course it does! This is how life works! And, you must pay the full price in advance!

"We have seen too much defeatism, too much pessimism, too much of a negative approach. The answer is simple: If you want something very badly, you can achieve it. It may take patience, very hard work, a real struggle, and a long time; but it can be done... faith is a prerequisite of any undertaking..."

-- Margo Jones

To earn more next year, you will have to work harder, work smarter, invest in new equipment, hire more employees, or learn new skills. Something will have to change, and the change must start with you.

To lose weight, you may have to change your diet, eat less, or exercise more. That requires time, and personal discipline. If your goal is important, you must be willing to pay the full price.

3. Design a Personal Eco-System™! This is an essential step and the place where many people get lost. Human beings don't work well in isolation. We are social creatures and we require the support of friends and family to achieve our goals. We love being part of teams, and we live in communities because of the support we receive.

But too often, we set personal goals and then try to do it alone, as if our biggest dreams are a deep, personal secret. It doesn't work that way. Obviously, no one likes to announce a goal to their friends, and then fail. But, by keeping our goals a secret and not designing a Personal Eco-System™, we virtually guarantee our failure. Remember the poet? No man (or woman) is an island!

Whatever your goals for the new year, create a system that supports you and guarantees your success. What should be in your Personal Eco-System™? At least the following:

- A Vision or Dream that is worthy of you
- A written plan to guide you
- 3 friends who will cheer you on
- A mentor to show you the way
- A chart or graph to mark your progress
- The equipment or tools for success
- Time to review and renew your determination every day

A New Year's Resolution without a written plan is little more than a fantasy. Even written goals, no matter how clear and inviting, are unlikely to endure without a Personal Eco-System™ that pushes and pulls and encourages and drives you forward. To guarantee your success, set goals, decide to pay the price, and create a system that makes your success a virtual certainty.

"Follow your dream...take one step at a time and don't settle for less, just continue to climb."

- **Amanda Bradley**

Chapter 3:

Personal Eco-Systems™: Personal Journals

As we start the new year, I want to focus on the skills that are essential for taking control of your life, your future, and your ultimate success. Our theme will be on designing a Personal Eco-System™ so that your values, your desires and your success flow naturally from your daily activities.

As powerful as they are, Personal Eco-Systems™ that automatically pull you to your goals usually begin with something as mundane as a Personal Journal. Jim Rohn has said that his three most valuable possessions are his family, his library, and his journals, because if he lost everything else, but had his books, his notes, and the support of his family, he could start over and build everything again.

I have kept journals for almost 30 years, and they are truly one of my most valuable possessions. They summarize my life, my successes and failures, my pains and my joys. And, perhaps most importantly, they contain my vision and they keep me on track.

I believe a journal is the essential first step to success because anyone can do it. Keeping track of your ideas, writing down your dreams and noting your progress is so basic that anyone who "doesn't have time" is probably kidding themselves. Show me a person's journal, and I can tell you how serious they are about their future.

One of the most frequent questions I receive is "How do I start a journal?" The simplest answer is that any diary, notebook or scrap of paper is better than nothing. Just begin!

But here are a few things that can help make your Personal Journal as effective, powerful, easy and focused as possible:

- 1. Keep it close.** To be effective, your journal must be honest, and you may not want other people reading it, so keep it safe. Keep it handy so you can write whenever thoughts, ideas or opportunities present themselves. Plan to record what's important to you - not the minor details of your schedule, but the ideas that catch your imagination.
- 2. Keep it simple.** Some folks buy "blank books", and Jim Rohn uses an expensive, leather book that symbolizes the value of his journal. Many people use spiral notebooks, or their

"Don't worry about whether or not I am now happy. Today is only chapter 1. We have yet to write the book."

- Lois Wyse

computers. Personally, I use ring binders so I can easily insert cards and letters, articles, and notes that I've jotted in restaurants or airplanes. Use what works for you.

3. Keep it organized. I recommend having a specific section for your goals, so you can review them often. In my ring binder, I use separator tabs to create several distinct sections. Whatever works for you is the right system, but organize it so you can find your notes and review them often.

4. Keep it inspiring. Some people use their journals as a place to whine and complain. Don't do that! Your journal is not a place for tears. It is a place of dreams, of challenge and inspiration. Use quotes, humor or decorate it with pictures, but remember - your journal is about designing your future. Write about what you want, not what you fear.

Of course, you should note your mistakes or disappointments so you can learn from them. But this is not a diary of failures. You are creating the blueprints of success, so keep it positive.

5. Keep it full. Include a wide variety of dreams. I use separate sections for financial goals, personal goals, business plans, fitness goals, and notes from all over, right in my personal journal. Any time I want to be inspired, I pick up my journal and there are so many ideas and possibilities, I can't help but be compelled to action! Your journal should call to you in the same way.

6. Keep it daily. The more you write, the more valuable your journal will become. Over time, journals grow and take on a life of their own. Ideas mingle and give birth to new ideas. Last year's dreams become this year's achievements, and inspire bigger and better dreams for next year. If you forget for a while, don't give up. Just dust it off, and start again. Challenge yourself to write each day.

In the next few chapters, we'll look at how Personal Eco- Systems™ help you design your personal space, organize your time, and create an environment that automatically encourages your success. But the first step is to keep notes.

The path from "here" to "there" always begins with a description of where you want to go and a plan for getting there. Your journal is where you draw your maps, clarify your dreams, sort your priorities and create the future. Successful people have always kept journals, from Henry Thoreau and Emily Dickinson, to Jim Rohn and Annie Dillard. Thomas Edison left over 1200 notebooks when he died, and the world is (literally) a brighter place because of it. Document your own inventiveness and guarantee your future success by keeping notes in your Personal Journal.

"We must be willing to get rid of the life we've planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us."

- Joseph Campbell

Chapter 4:

Personal Eco-Systems™: Space Management

Personal Eco-Systems™ describe the fact that highly successful people surround themselves with people, patterns, and tools that "automatically" create success. They are encouraged and supported by every one and every thing around them, and are actually pulled toward their dreams.

It's not an accident that some people have all the "luck". They arrange it that way! Highly successful people know that a beautiful office, someone to screen their calls, the right tools and equipment, and "dressing for success", all work together to create a highly efficient, highly focused environment where they get more done. They have a highly developed Personal Eco-System™.

Now, and this is critical, we *all* have a Personal Eco-System™! Some of us have Eco-Systems filled with clutter, chaos, confusion and conflict. Those systems may not be as productive, or as pleasant, but they are still a system. They are predictable, and can be remarkably stable over time. It may not be the Eco-System we prefer, and it may have evolved by accident, but we are used to it. It's familiar. We know how to cope with it, and we take it for granted.

The key to developing a highly efficient, extremely productive Personal Eco-System™ is to design it on purpose. Surround yourself with things that support you in achieving your highest goals and expressing your most important values.

My friend, mentor, and a founder of the Coaching profession, Thomas Leonard, has said that "space management is more important than time management". I've never forgotten that, because it is not just true, it is incredibly and profoundly true. It's a truth that can change your life forever!

You can buy and use DayRunners™ or one of the new PDA's all day long, but if your life is filled with unexpected calls, missing files, clutter, chaos and confusion, you will never be as productive as you could be.

Imagine, instead, that your office is gorgeous, with a view of the mountains or the ocean. You can't wait to arrive in the morning. As you work, each tool is at your finger-tips and

"God gives talent, work transforms talent into genius."

- Anna Pavlova

"Courage is the price that life exacts for granting peace. The soul that knows it not, knows no release from little things."

- Amelia Earhart

performs perfectly. Your leather chair suits you perfectly, and each file, each phone number, and each task is exactly where it should be. The carpet soothes your feet, and your favorite music is on the stereo. Would you be more productive? Would feel better about yourself, your work, and your future?
Of course you would!

If the first key to a highly productive Personal Eco-System™ is keeping a journal - developing a map and plans, writing down your dreams and defining your goals - then the second essential key is developing an environment that perfectly suits your needs and desires.

"Space management is more important than time management."

Surround yourself with the ideal tools and equipment. Let people know how they can support you, and teach them what to say, how to act, and when to hug you. Dress for success! If necessary, paint your office, buy new furniture or a few CD's so the music of your heart actually fills the space around you.

Managing your personal environment is absolutely critical to your long-term success. Invest in yourself! Clean up your act. Vacuum your car or get it washed. Hire someone to clean your office. Use an answering service to screen your calls. Fix or replace broken equipment or out-dated systems. Highly successful people know that their Personal Eco-System™ either creates success, or it undermines their dreams. Design your system to automatically create the life you really, really want.

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."

- Helen Keller

Chapter 5:

Personal Eco-Systems™: Daily Direction

As I've written before, we live and work within patterns and habits that can be viewed as an "eco-system". The system is made up of our physical environment (our homes and offices), the people around us (friends, family and associates), and the choices we make.

There are two vital things to understand about Personal Eco-Systems™. The first is that they influence what, and how much, we produce, and secondly, that we can intentionally create systems that help us achieve our goals.

Let me explain. Everyone remembers trying to do a familiar activity in a situation where we just can't perform. A common example is trying to read in a noisy waiting room. Another example might be trying to sink a short putt to win a golf tournament. In that environment and under those conditions, even simple activities can be almost impossible.

Similarly, we are all familiar with creating a specific environment to encourage our success. We have all planned a romantic dinner where we paid attention to every detail, including the candles, the type of wine, and the music on the stereo. We were consciously creating an "eco-system" that would support our goals.

We all live in complex Personal Eco-Systems™ every day. The distinction is that most of us live in systems that have evolved by accident, over time. We work in an office with old equipment. We are surrounded by co-workers who just happened to be there. Our daily routines and schedules have evolved based on convenience, coincidence, and luck.

But highly successful people don't let that happen. They consciously create a precise environment that supports them in reaching their most important goals.

Unusually productive people care about the music on the stereo and they choose the tempo, rhythm and volume that keeps them "humming" all day long. They choose the color of their office, control the temperature, and turn the phone off when they need to concentrate, or during important meetings. They know the value of controlling their Personal Eco-System™.

An essential element in launching your Personal Eco-System is getting the day off to an great start. Remember the law of physics that an object set in motion tends to remain in motion? Something similar happens each morning.

"Success is neither magical or mysterious. Success is the natural consequence of consistently applying the basic fundamentals."

- Jim Rohn

"A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he knows something."

- Wilson Mizner

If we start off stressed, or "under the gun", we tend to remain that way. If we begin by being hassled on the freeway, being late for a meeting, worried about childcare, or distracted by the news, our day tends to continue with that same "flavor" to it. Don't do that!

Highly successful people know the value of controlling their "daily direction". They know that starting the day with some inspirational reading, or vibrant music, or stimulating conversation, will tend to invigorate the entire day. That's why every motivational speaker recommends listening to tapes in the morning, rather than the bad news on TV.

From Napoleon Hill over 70 years ago, to Tony Robbins and Marianne Williamson, the recommendation to start your day on purpose is universal. Set your daily direction. Control your trajectory early in the morning, and you will tend to stay on course all day long.

And here's a vital point: Throughout the day, reinforce your choices. Instead of rushing through lunch, take a nap, read 10 pages in your favorite book, or jot a note to a friend. Do something that represents your highest values and your most important priorities. On your coffee breaks, and over dinner, create a Personal Eco-System™ that reminds you that you are in control, that you live and work in a wonderful environment, filled with beauty, peace, inspiration and hope.

We can control the direction of our days, but most of us forget that and fail to use our personal power. We drift, we let the phone interrupt us, we get up 10 minutes late and end up running all day long. Use your power! Design the day that suits you, that feels "just right" and encourages you all day long. Highly successful people choose their Daily Direction. Starting tomorrow, use your personal power to design and control your Personal Eco-System™.

"I think the one lesson I have learned is that there is no substitute for paying attention."

- Diane Sawyer

Chapter 6:

Personal Eco-Systems™: Design for Success

According to common wisdom, most of our New Year's Resolutions have already been abandoned, forgotten, or ignored within three weeks.

There's a huge group of people who simply refuse to set goals because they are so frustrated with their failure to achieve them. Over and over, I hear people groan when we talk about setting goals. And, it may surprise you, but I agree with that assessment! If I failed to achieve 99% of my goals, I wouldn't set any more, either!

I'll go further, and say that most goals and "resolutions" are a waste of time, and delay and discourage success, rather than enhance it.

There's a famous quip that says, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over, and expecting a different result." I think that applies to how an awful lot of people create goals. They write down a list of goals, but then go right on living the same way and doing the same things they have in the past. No wonder they don't achieve their goals!

If you do what you've always done, you will get what you've always gotten. I guarantee it!

"If you really want something you can figure out how to make it happen."

- Cher

To change your outcomes, change your Personal Eco-System™!

Highly successful people know that the discipline to get up early, work hard, stay focused and achieve unusual results does not come easily. Most of us just aren't put together that way. In fact, we are creatures of habit who pretty much do the same things every day.

No wonder our goals get lost in the routine! It is *not* because we are bad or lazy or stupid or any other of those false and discouraging things we say to ourselves. It's because we live in Personal Eco-Systems™ that surround us with things so many things we "must" do that after working 10 or 12 or more hours, few people have the energy to think about reaching their goals and achieving unusual success.

The key to achieving your goals is to, first, design a success system that *automatically* encourages you to achieve your goals, while at the same time gradually removing everything that distracts or discourages you from moving forward.

Here is a small example: To lose weight, remove the sweets and chips-and-dips from the house. Replace them with fruits and vegetables, then hang some attractive pictures of yourself where you'll see them every day, and bribe the kids to help you lose weight. Simply cut a deal so that when you lose the weight, they get a trip to the movies. If you design the system correctly, the kids will *make* you lose weight!

What most of us do is keep the cookies and chips in the house, we "promise" to exercise, and we try very hard. We get frustrated because we are still living in the Eco-System that helped us gain the weight, and it doesn't work. The kids want ice cream, or we get a pizza on the way home from work. We get tired and exercising is hard. We lose our incentive, and keep the weight.

Change your Personal Eco-System™!

If you want to spend less and save more, you can either develop the discipline to change your habits through brute force, or you can change the way your Eco-System values money. I believe it is easier to change a Personal Eco-System™, than to change habits by brute force.

The key to achieving unusual success is creating a Personal Eco-System™ that makes it easier to succeed than to fail. Successful people have always done this. Thomas Edison lived in his laboratory. Oprah Winfrey surrounds herself with staff and friends who fully expect her to achieve! As a kid, Phil Mickelson built a putting green in his parent's back yard because he wanted play professional golf, and we have all witnessed the phenomenal success of Tiger Woods.

Highly successful people know where they are going, they know what is important, what they value, what they want. And they simply do not tolerate distractions, frustrations, and the daily "chatter" that burns up energy and wastes their time. They design their environment so that their highest priorities are obvious. Their goals are achieved not because they are unusual people, but because they have created Personal Eco-Systems™ that make success likely.

You can too!

"People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing. That's why we recommend it daily."

- Zig Ziglar

Chapter 7:

The Role of Money

I am frequently struck by our ability to hunger for more, even after we are full.

Recently, two news items caught my attention. First, the Centers for Disease Control reported an epidemic of diabetes in America, and tied it directly to our eating habits. According to the CDC, we are literally eating ourselves to death.

Second, the cover of Newsweek magazine talks about "The Parent Trap", our insatiable drive for families to be involved in every activity, to have every new toy, and to live as "well" as our richest neighbors, no matter what the cost.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson wisely said over 100 years ago, "Sometimes money costs too much."

I believe the American dream is primarily about happiness. Our Declaration of Independence speaks of our "right to...the pursuit of happiness", which suggests a sense of balance, personal satisfaction, inner peace and contentment. More money does not always buy happiness.

And yet, the lack of money is no virtue, either. A lack of money undermines our sense of freedom and limits our ability to act. A lack of money can be a cancer that deprives our children of education, and our families of peace and harmony.

This series on Personal Eco-Systems(tm) is about designing a life, rather than chasing a lifestyle, and central to creating the life you really want is a clear philosophy about the role of money. How much is enough, and what are you willing to do to get, and keep, more of it?

The answers to these questions, to a large degree, will determine every other aspect of your life.

I recently had conversations with a man who seems so driven for "more money" that in our discussions about life, goals and dreams, he never mentioned his family, his community, or any thing other than his desire for more money. He struck me as being obsessed.

Another individual reported she has made over \$30,000 "so far" this month, but her expenses are more than that, and she wondered if coaching could help her earn more, so she wouldn't feel so poor.

"Some say
knowledge is
power, but that
is not true.
Character is
power."

- Sathya Sai
Baba

I have written extensively about the tools for becoming rich. There are several Top 10 articles and even a free book on attracting, keeping and managing money. I'll put links to those resources at the end of this article, but in brief, the keys to getting rich are simple:

- 1. Do something you love enough to get very, very good at it.** Do lots of it, do it with flair and joy, and let people know.
- 2. Focus on increasing value rather than on making more money.** Let your income be the result of your contribution. It works out better.
- 3. Spend less than you make.** No matter what you make, someone in town lives on a bit less. Live like they do and save the difference.
- 4. Strive to get rich slowly.** Understand your investments, manage them patiently, and don't get greedy. Over time, it's the path to wealth.

"The only devils in the world are those running round in our own hearts, and that is where all our battles ought to be fought."

- Mahatma Gandhi

I am convinced that the role of money is key to developing a Personal Eco-System(tm) that will sustain and satisfy you. Money is a lubricant that makes many things easier. It is a reward for work well done, a source of satisfaction and personal security. But, it can also be an addiction, it can poison relationships, and destroy lives.

As much as you strive for more money, work to understand it. As much as you desire to have it, desire to manage and use it well. Highly successful people often give little thought to money because they are so busy pursuing their purposes, their dreams, and their passions. The money is the natural reward for their contribution, their hard work, and their persistence.

You can review several articles on attracting and keeping money, and becoming wealthy at:
<http://www.philiphumbert.com/Top10Index.htm>

Also, my free book, "Making Money, Creating Wealth", is available at:
<http://www.philiphumbert.com/eBook.htm>

Chapter 8:

Personal Eco-System™: The Power of Relationships

This week, a client told me she spends 3 hours a week driving to lunch with a colleague who earned almost two million dollars in commissions last year. She admitted that it's a long drive and added, "she doesn't exactly mentor me in any specific way, but I always learn so much from being around her. It's important for me to be around people like that."

What a recipe for success!

The people around us always influence us. Their actions, their beliefs, their attitudes and their words rub off on us! It's automatic, it's inevitable, and it has tremendous predictive value - the people we associate with does predict the kind of person we will become in the future.

Remember when you were a child and your parents were concerned about the kids you hung out with? Well, mother was right!

Years ago, I did therapy with people who had drug and alcohol problems. Many of them only knew people they met on the street, or at parties. In therapy, they would tell me that they did not have a problem, that they were no worse off than everyone else - and from their perspective they were absolutely correct.

Admittedly, that is an extreme example, but think about how most of us assess our parenting skills, or our sales skills, or our attitudes toward debt and credit cards and our use of leisure time. We learn from our friends!

Highly successful people surround themselves with people whose lives reflect the values, the priorities, the behaviors and the successes they desire for their own lives. And, they are very intentional about it.

Most of us choose our friends based on who happens to show up. We talk with the neighbors, get along with the people at work, and select our friends from those who seem to be most like us. We feel "comfortable" with them, and after a period of time, they become our friends.

Friendship ought not be the accidental result of convenience!

Highly successful people seek out people who can teach them about integrity, or about making more sales. They seek out people whose income or family relationships or attitudes

"A wise man will
make more
opportunities
than he finds."

- Francis
Bacon

will teach them something valuable! They work hard at being influenced by friends who will challenge and encourage and push and pull them to become the people they want to be.

Am I suggesting that you should refuse to talk to the couch potato next door, or refuse to join office crowd for lunch? Of course not!

I am suggesting that the people around you are a powerful component of your Personal Eco-System(tm). If the people you spend time with are people you respect, and if they are slightly ahead of you in experience, wisdom, sound judgment, compassion and achievement - GREAT! Hang out with them and learn all you can! Watch them, listen to them, laugh with them, and let their skills rub off on you.

And, if the people in your Personal Eco-System(tm) are less accomplished, less ambitious and less focused than you would like, make some changes! You can not afford to hang out with people who undermine your ambition, question your goals, and ridicule your values! They will, as the kids say, "bring you down"! Don't do that to yourself!

The people we associate with says a great deal about us. We live in a time when we can have lunch with just about anyone we choose. We can associate with people who have achieved any goal, learned any skill, or mastered any discipline we would like to have in our lives.

Whether or not we reach out to the "best and the brightest" is a choice. Whether we spend time with great leaders and high achievers, is a choice. Whether we spend our time with people we respect and who can teach us, or whether we are content to have a beer with the guys from the office, is a choice.

In your Personal Eco-System(tm), surround yourself with leaders, with readers, with people whose personalities and achievements you admire. Surround yourself with stories that inspire you, with people who will teach you. Surround yourself with talent and let it rub off on you!

"No love, no friendship can cross the path of our destiny without leaving some mark on it forever."

- Francois Mauriac

Chapter 9:

Personal Eco-Systems(tm): The Time Of Your Life

We humans are remarkable in our ability to cope with change. Our brains process trillions of bits of information, our nervous systems monitor hundreds of relationships, and our bodies can even adapt to fast food and airline seating! We have grown accustomed to hurrying, to living with stress, and coping with enormous pressures. We can do this.

But that doesn't mean we were designed to live this way. In our rush to keep up, I suspect we often miss the most important things life has to offer.

In terms of human history, we live in a very strange time.

It is hard to imagine, but until World War II, it was unusual to see an orange in winter. Except for the war, few people had ever travelled more than a few miles from home. Telephones were new, televisions were rare, and there was no such thing as health insurance. In 1947, Tom Watson, founder of IBM, predicted that the entire world market for computers would never require more than a handful of the expensive, complicated machines.

"We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are."

- Anais Nin

What does this suggest when it comes to designing our Personal Eco-Systems(tm), the environments in which we work and live? Unlike every other species, we get to choose our daily environments. We design our homes and our offices. We choose the furniture, the music, the colors and the views.

We either fill our Personal Eco-System(tm) with things that inspire and encourage us, or we allow ourselves to be surrounded by stuff that "just shows up". I think there are several important implications for those of us who choose to live our lives on purpose:

1. The need for peace and quiet. It is no coincidence that we see a tremendous interest in meditation, spirituality, and "the simple life". There are many ways to slow down - some of us read a book, others take a hot bath, some go for a run. If you want to achieve your goals and have the life of your dreams, create time for peace and quiet.

2. The need for traditions. Humans seem to like rituals. We have holidays and we dance a lot. We exchange gifts and have built an industry out of greeting cards. For some, tradition is about religious celebrations or cultural heritage. For others, traditions come from family and personal experience. Whatever traditions and rituals are important to you, take time. Make time to include them in your Personal Eco-System(tm).

3. The need for wisdom. Never has it been easier to access data. We are swamped with information, but wisdom, insight and balance seem to be rare. I think reading helps. Time for conversation, thoughtful debate and listening to our elders seems to help. Take time to grow, to learn, to *absorb* life.

4. The need for persistence. I am convinced this is one of the essential requirements for success, and one of the great casualties of our high-speed society. Some things take time! To raise a child, takes time. To build a life, takes time. Building a business or learning a profession, or nurturing a relationship, takes time.

Too often we are like the farmer who plows and cultivates the ground, plants the seed, waits a week, and then impatiently digs up the ground, asking "Where's my crop?" The hard work that could have yielded extraordinary riches, is destroyed. Impatience is the enemy of success.

In a world of instant communication and constant change, we need systems to slow us down. We need time to breath, time to rest, time to play, time to succeed. We need time to love, to grow, to enjoy our wealth and our health.

As you create your Personal Eco-System(tm), defend your right to slow down. Create spaces and times to dance, and when appropriate, to cry. Cherish your most important relationships, allow time for community, for family, for friends and lovers. And allow time for your own success. Remember that most over-night successes are the result of many years of effort. Give yourself the gift of time. You deserve it!

"Meditation is the serious intention of the mind whereby we come to search out the truth, and settle it effectively upon the heart."

- Thomas Hooker

Chapter 10:

What do You Want, and How Will You Earn It?

Some of the most basic questions in life are to decide what we want, and whether or not we are willing to pay the price to achieve it.

In all of nature, it seems that only humans get to ask and answer these questions. Only we can create our own future, and only we must do it, because there is no escaping this obligation.

We can pretend that we "must" live where we live, or have the personality, the situation or the opinions that we do, but that is simply not true. As the Spanish philosophy, Ortega, observed, "we must choose."

History is filled with examples of those who have built the life they wanted for themselves. Personally, my most inspiring example is Helen Keller. Her life amazes me, and when I become discouraged, or tired, I think of her, and I am embarrassed. Blind and deaf, she stands as an enormous example of what is possible.

Unfortunately, we also have far too many examples of those who gave up, gave in, or just walked away.

Because life is unfair, we all have our problems, our blind-spots and our limitations, and some of us have suffered unspeakably at the hands of violent, uncaring people. Evil happens.

The question is not whether life is hard. Of course it is! The question is not whether some people have it easier than us. Of course they do! The question – the *only* question - is how we will respond to our present situation.

I am concerned that we are developing two very popular, but inappropriate models in our culture. One is the chance to "win" instant success. Shows like, *"Who Wants to Be A Millionaire"*, and *"Survivor"*, along with state lotteries and legalized gambling tell us that work, effort, responsibility and persistence are no longer important.

They tell us that luck or "surviving" are the paths to quick and easy success. Unfortunately, I suspect the message is both dishonest, and at bottom, destructive.

The other popular model is a sense of helplessness, a sense of being victimized and powerless. Nothing could be further from the truth!

"Nothing splendid has ever been achieved except by those who dared believe that something inside them was superior to circumstance."

- Bruce Barton

Never have more people had more access to education – and never has education been so important. Never has it been easier to start your own business, move to any climate or city on earth, or meet and learn from anyone you choose. Never have so many people had so much control over their own lives!

Do you dislike your job? Do you dislike your wardrobe, your habits, the home in which you live, or the weather outside your door? Do you wish you had more education or better health?

All of these things can be changed! No, they can't be changed over night, and there is no "magic wand" that will change these things for you. You, however, have the power to change any of these things.

There are books and tapes and therapists. There are resources on the Internet and at your place of worship. There are classes and workshops. There are people who will coach you, teach you, cheer for you, and show you the way.

I recently had the privilege of working with a woman whose husband died suddenly at age 44. They had a 4-year old daughter, and because his business was struggling, he left my client almost \$500,000 in debt. Today, 17 months later, she is nearly debt-free, has completed her private pilot's license, and is working to become a commercial flight instructor.

Yes, she still has problems and challenges, but she also has a home and friends, a new career, and opportunities that would never have been possible had she not faced, responded, and over-come the disaster of her husband's untimely death.

Each of us must face this question of how we will live our lives, of how we will use our days and our energy and the strength of our will. What do you want, and how will you earn it?

"You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face.... You must do the thing which you think you cannot do."

- Eleanor Roosevelt

Chapter 11:

Personal Eco-Systems(tm): The Joy of Painting

Success and joy often arrive in unexpected ways, wrapped in plain brown paper. Last week, I spoke in Ottawa, Ontario, then flew to Chicago, where I took a break from speaking and coaching to spend a few days with my parents.

My sister arranged for us "kids" to spend a few days working on our parent's house and getting to know each other again. We did lots of painting, remodeled a bathroom, cleaned carpets, and took turns treating the family to way too much good food. We worked hard, had fun, and renewed our sense of closeness as a family. It was wonderful!

Our greatest achievement, however, were several "learnings" about the meaning of success and keeping a clean nest.

As we painted bedrooms, they not only looked better, but the bright yellow walls, white trim and new curtains added light, energy, optimism and laughter to our lives. We added paint; the environment gave back joy.

I've written about the importance of Personal Eco-Systems(tm), and once again those lessons hit home. We can not escape the environment in which we eat, sleep, live and breath. The colors and the clutter, the furniture and the music influence us, and we either control those influences, or they "just happen", and too often the results undermine our dreams.

Failing to control your environment is directly related to failing to achieve your dreams, and that is too high a price to pay.

As we painted, we gained confidence. As we painted, the rooms came alive with color, and our enthusiasm, our energy, and our laughter increased. As we painted, we had more fun, and the lesson was obvious: Those who control their environment, also control the quality of their lives.

Over the years, I've observed that highly successful people keep their lives "freshly painted". There is little clutter, and very little friction or disruption in their lives. They know where they are going, and they arrange their circumstances to help them in get there.

So, are there areas in your life that might benefit from a fresh coat of paint? Here are some areas you might examine to see if they are supporting you, or holding you back:

"Our main business is not to see what lies dimly at a distance, but to do what lies clearly at hand."

- Thomas
Carlyle

1. Quality relationships. Highly successful people surround themselves with interesting, competent, challenging and creative people. They learn the skills for relating well and for partnering with people who can help them achieve their dreams.

2. A clean nest. Remember the old saying, "Cleanliness is next to godliness"? Too often we have replaced it with the joke that a "clean desk is a sign of a sick mind", but it is not true! Precision, performance, completing our tasks, and attending to the details of life do make a difference in the results we achieve. If appropriate, clean up your nest.

3. Financial fitness. Whether the problem is debt or not balancing the checkbook, financial problems "clutter up" every aspect of life. Highly successful people manage their money. They know where they stand and they have goals for their financial future. The issue is not how much you have, but how well you manage it.

4. Directional Stability. Successful people create environments that remind them of their goals, and they seldom waiver in their determination to get there. Surround yourself with pictures and posters of what you want. Fill your environment with the tools and "road-maps" that pull you forward. Half the time we're "lost" simply because we've forgotten where we want to go!

"The game of life is a game of boomerangs. Our thoughts, deeds and words return to us sooner or later, with astounding accuracy."

- Florence Scovel Shinn

Whether you use the metaphor of "painting" or find another image that works for you, understand what highly successful people have always known: Success is not an accident! Achievement is the result of clear objectives, careful planning, persistent effort and creating an environment that makes success come easily! Surround yourself with the people and the colors, the space and the music that push and pull and drive you forward.

A Personal Eco-System(tm) of richness and simple elegance doesn't cost, it pays! The high costs in life are related to working in situations that don't support and nourish our dreams. Surround yourself with fresh paint, bright colors and clear images! You deserve nothing less!

Chapter 12:

Personal Eco-Systems(tm): The Necessity for Action!

I've written a great deal about Personal Eco-Systems(tm) that dramatically increase your probability of success. Athletes not only practice, they immerse themselves in their sport. They watch it on TV, they carry a basketball in their car, talk about it in sports bars and with their friends. They live their passion!

Highly successful people always do this!

Successful managers think about leadership every day. They talk with other managers, watch how meetings are run, preview future meetings in their imaginations, and review past memories for tricks, tips, and possibilities.

Successful parents talk with other parents, asking advice or comparing notes. They take classes or read books on parenting skills. They ask for feedback from their spouse, or from their children. Great parenting is the result of dedicated, intentional study.

One of my clients has been taking piano lessons and this week she described how she listens to tapes in her car, attends concerts, bought a piano for her living room, and has photographs and posters of musicians throughout her home. She makes it easy to practice, and in only two years, at age 63, she's become remarkably skilled at something she's dreamed of doing all her life.

The key is to surround yourself with the tools that make success more and more likely.

As a coach, I notice that my most productive clients have always done this. They invest in their offices. They "dress for success" and live as the people they want to become. They listen to tapes in their cars, read biographies about their heroes, they think about their goals, and they hire coaches to help them achieve.

Other people say, "those things might help, but" They have excuses. They don't take action, even when the first actions might simply be writing their goals on a piece of paper. They "don't have time" to clean up their office, or read a book. They "can't afford" to buy a tape or hire a coach. They have excuses. What they don't have is action toward their goals.

If you are serious about creating the life you truly want, here are some "First Actions" toward a Personal Eco-System(tm) for your success:

"Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved."

- Jeremy
Kitson

1. If you haven't done so, write down what you really want. Be specific. Write down your desired weight or income, or get a photograph of the home you want to buy. Then, keep this statement or photo where you will see it every day. Take action! Put a statement of what you want where it will remind you every morning.

2. Add visual cues. These might be posters on the wall, or tools of your trade. It might be clothes that make you "feel like a million bucks", or a new desk, or a good luck charm you carry in your pocket. Create visual cues! Don't worry that you can't transform *every* aspect of life. Take action and start!

3. Add auditory cues, such as motivational tapes or CD's. Rent movies that show people fulfilling your dreams of travel or athletic success. Talk about what you want with friends and loved ones. Have fun with this! Talk about your heroes, remind yourself of who you are, and where you're going in life.

4. Get a Board of Directors, people who can advise and support you. Ideally, this might include a professional coach, but at least talk with people who share your passion and can encourage you. Talk with the best parents you can find. Talk with successful business leaders or expert teachers. Find people who will show you the way.

Surround yourself with people and images that propel you forward! Create a system for success, a Personal Eco-System(tm) that is uniquely yours. Surround yourself with the books and tapes that excite you. Spend time with people who inspire and teach you. Take action to create the life you truly want this week! If you can't do it all at once, do what you can, but start. Why wait? Your future begins *now*!

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment to improve the world."

- Ann Frank

Chapter 13:

Personal Eco-Systems™: Coasting to Success

I am old enough to remember holding my breath during re-entry of the early space flights. The reason for the world's anxiety was that, after flying to the moon and back, the Apollo space craft had to hit the earth's atmosphere at exactly the right angle, at exactly the right time. If they missed, the astronauts would either burn up, or go past the earth and be lost forever in space.

Those early flights taught me the importance of details.

Success is *not* an accident! It is not the result of “luck” or talent, or education or being born rich. Success is the natural result of doing the right things in the right way, at the right time.

Successful people have always known this and they create Personal Eco-Systems™ that make success not only possible, but likely.

A Personal Eco-System™ is not about ego, or about the perks of being rich or famous. It's actually the reverse! Those perks result from being prepared, from showing up on time, and doing the right things in the right way. Success is the RESULT of having a Personal Eco-System™ that makes peak performance possible.

And here is a wonderful secret! Fully 90% of a perfect Personal Eco-System™ costs absolutely nothing. It doesn't even require much time or effort. Yes, having a nice computer might help, and a huge corner office might be impressive, but those things are the RESULT of success, not the key components for creating success.

That is an essential distinction. Understand the difference between a Personal Eco-System™ that creates success, versus the perks and luxuries that may RESULT from being successful. Too many people want the Lexus first – and never get it paid off!

Most of the components of a Personal Eco-System™ are “in the details”. Here are a few places to start:

1. Daily routines that serve us well. Benjamin Franklin noted that, “Early to bed, early to rise makes a man (or woman) healthy, wealthy and wise.” Keeping an ambitious, rigorous daily schedule seems to help. It may cost \$10 for a new alarm clock, but the critical element is the will to set a productive schedule and stick to it.

“In each of us
are places
where we have
never gone.
Only by
pressing the
limits do you
ever find them.”

- Dr. Joyce
Brothers

2. Diet and exercise. Take care of your body, because it's the only "space craft" you have. Whether you join a fitness club or adopt a particular diet does not seem as important as the principle of taking care of yourself. Having the energy to achieve your goals may depend on eating a good breakfast. Pay attention to the basics.

3. Clean up, fix up. Performance counts, and performance is largely the result of having a work space that is pleasant, comfortable and productive. A new desk lamp can reduce fatigue. Cleaning the carpet may reduce allergies. A good filing system reduces frustration and delay. Your favorite music may keep you going after lunch.

4. Chart your course. This may be the most personal and the most important. Every day, spend time thinking about your future, your life, your values, and your choices. Decide where you're going, and write it down. I do it early in the morning, some of my clients do it just before bed. Find your system, and USE it! Successful people do this.

Creating a Personal Eco-System™ is neither expensive nor difficult, but it does require an attention to details and a willingness to create the life you really want. Successful people take advantage of these "small" things that carry them to their goals.

Coming back from the moon was very easy. The astronauts fired a small rocket and then just coasted all the way home. But firing that rocket at the right time, in the right direction, was literally a matter of life or death. Your Personal Eco-System™ functions much the same way. Take action! Create the system that allows you to "coast" all the way home.

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover."

- Mark Twain

Personal Eco-Systems™: Final Notes

This is a book about personal responsibility. In the end, we create the life we truly want, whether we admit that or not. Over time, we do the things that are most important to us, and in small daily steps, we create our lives.

Yes, many people have pointed out that we are certainly influenced by our community, by our genetic and cultural heritage, and by a myriad of other influences, from the weather to those amazing “coincidences” that open doors and create opportunities.

For all of that, however, there is no denying that we are our own most important “influence”. On a daily basis, some people get up earlier than others. Some simply work harder. Some people make the calls, read the books, simplify and focus their daily routine so that they create what our culture refers to as “success” in terms of money, fame, power or political leadership.

But whether we focus our efforts on a specific form of success, or whether we scatter our efforts over a wide range of interests and achieve far less of what the world calls “success”, we are still in charge. *We* choose. No one chooses for us. In the thousands of daily details, we decide how to live our lives.

In the chaos of daily busy-ness, we can forget to utilize our personal power, but it is still there, waiting for us. If we wish, we can change our lives. We can live in new ways, spend our time, our money and our energy differently, and in a thousand ways, large and small, we create a new world whenever we choose.

We can balance our checkbooks, read for a few minutes before work, or ask a colleague for advice, assistance and encouragement. These are the small steps that make all the difference. We can design systems that work for us. We can align our energy with good people. We can make success automatic so that it becomes part of our daily routine, like brushing our teeth or driving to work. We can do this!

The first words spoken by a human on the surface of the moon were, “That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.” Each small step takes you forward. Each small step makes the next one easier. Each small step creates the Personal Eco-System™ for success. You can do this! Why wait? Start *now*.

“That’s one small step for a man, one giant leap for mankind.”

- Neil
Armstrong, on
the Sea of
Tranquility,
1969