

## Working on yourself

By the time high school graduation rolled around, I was sick of studying. I had spent so many hours pouring over textbooks; I decided that I never wanted to see another one when I was done with school. I surmised that my goal to become an Army Officer would totally support my desire to stay away from books and studying because life in the army would find me too busy running around the countryside and firing guns. To my surprise, after I had enlisted, I discovered that not only was I doing all of the running I had envisioned but in addition I also had a big stack of books to study. Of course, it made perfect sense, since I knew nothing about being a soldier; I had to learn. It dawned on me then that we never stop learning and in order to achieve something we've never achieved before we have to learn and practice something we've never learnt nor practice before. General Robert E Lee hit the nail on the head when he said "The education of man is never completed until he dies"

### **Continuous And Never-ending Improvement**

As my staff sergeant at Sandhurst used to say,, " it is not rocket science." In order to achieve your goals you must become someone different from the person you currently are. This does not mean denying or changing the essence of who you are but instead recognizing that your current skill set and level of thinking will not take you to the next level of achievement. All things being equal, your friends and family would agree that you are the same person you were when you were in high school and college. On the other hand, wouldn't you agree that the knowledge you have acquired and the skills you have developed over the years have resulted in a personal transformation? Haven't those skills and knowledge equipped you to accomplish goals you would have been incapable of achieving at an earlier stage of your life?

The challenge is that too many of us restrict our personal growth and development to situations and environments where we are forced to grow. In school we have to learn the material or fail the course. On the job we are forced to develop unique skills or join the unemployment line. The successful ones do not become that way by being forced fed. Instead they embrace the concept of **CANI**. Continuous And Never-ending Improvement. They make a commitment to develop the skills and acquire the knowledge they need to succeed. True personal growth then, is not force fed but acquired through a continuous effort to self-improve

### **Become an Olympian in life**

My suggestion is to take on the persona of an Olympic athlete. For the athlete to perform better in her chosen sport she must become better. She must become stronger and faster. Her technical skills must become more polished and her mental game must improve. The more she works on her core skills the better she gets, the more confident she becomes and the more she likes and respects herself not just as an athlete but as a whole person.

The same is true for all of us who compete in the Olympics of life. As you identify and work on the core mental and technical skills you need to get to the next level, you will find yourself progressing in similar fashion to an athlete. As you improve, you will find that you like, respect

and believe in yourself even more. Your self-esteem will grow, your thinking will expand and your mind will open up to new challenges and ultimately new opportunities.

Studies have shown that people spend more money on toiletries than they do on self-improvement. Your efforts in self-improvement and personal growth are necessary investments to develop your potential for greatness. Remember, Olympic athletes are not born; they are made—they spend an inordinate amount of time practicing and preparing. It is this incessant preparation which allows them to perform at such high levels and to do so with ease. Men and women who are at the top of their fields are not necessarily more gifted than those who are struggling to find their way. They stand out because they embrace the concept of **CANI** and in so doing ensure the skills they have and the talents they were endowed with are developed to a level well above average. Will you join them?

Here are some steps you can implement immediately:

1.

1. Identify the additional knowledge and skills you need to achieve your goals. The level of knowledge and skill you have today is rapidly becoming obsolete and has to be upgraded frequently and quickly. To accomplish more tomorrow, you have to be better than you are today.
2. Make time to read for one hour every day. One hour of daily reading will allow you to complete an average length book in a week. Reading fifty-two books a year in your chosen field will help you to become an expert in that field.
3. Transform some of your commuting time into learning time. Instead of tuning into your favorite DJ, listen to a motivational CD or a book-on-tape. You have many to choose from and you will find that it is time well spent.

Keep On Pushing!

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