



The Essentials of Personal Growth

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The Essentials of Personal Growth is a free course on creating the life you desire. This 5-part series will uncover the most fundamental principles of personal growth; from goal setting, to visualizing, to taking action. The Essentials of Personal Growth will teach you the principles of achieving lasting, positive change in your life.

Part I: Taking an Honest Life Assessment

Step one is to understand where you're currently at in life. This chapter helps you take an accurate assessment of your current life position.

Part II: Purposeful Decision Making

Once you know where you're at in life, it's time to make some decisions. This chapter explains how your vast decision making powers can be utilized.

Part III: A Fresh Approach to Goal Setting

Trying to achieve anything without a goal is like sailing without a compass. This chapter explains the process of setting goals that you can actually achieve.

Part IV: Using The Law of Attraction

The "law of attraction" is a powerful but often misunderstood concept. This chapter debunks some of the common myths and presents a more accurate understanding of the LoA.

Part V: Taking Action in the Now

There is never any time but the present. The first 4 steps will be worthless without daily, consistent action. This chapter explains the best tool to keep yourself focused on the right actions.

Part I: Taking an Honest Life Assessment

How healthy are you? What impacts are you making in your career? Do you consider yourself to have mastery over your emotions? Can you clearly identify where you stand financially? As you begin your path towards personal growth, it's important to take a complete assessment of your life as it stands in this moment. When you have a clear picture of your current life situation, you can begin to set the right goals and move towards the success that you desire.

Before You Can Set Goals

Taking an eye-opening life assessment exercise will help you create an accurate picture of your strengths and weaknesses, but most importantly it will help you set goals that are more fulfilling and that you have better chance of accomplishing.

Many people set goals and fail over and over again. They often cite lack of discipline, not enough skill, or a number of other reasons for their failure. I believe that in the majority off these cases the individuals are setting goals without truly understanding their current situation in life. This will cause a number of problems.

By setting a goal to achieve something without assessing where you are at right now, how can you know what to aim for? How high should you aim? What can you reasonably expect to accomplish and in what timeframe? And ultimately, what goals will truly make you happy? Until you create an honest life assessment, these questions are almost impossible to answer.

Even worse, if you are clueless about your current position in some area, how will you ever know when the goal is accomplished? Someone who sets a goal without first taking the time to

deeply assess every area of their life is just kidding themselves. It's almost impossible for them to achieve their goal.

On the other hand, the individual who has spent plenty of time working to understand himself, know his weaknesses, and clearly see what position he's at in every area of his life has a huge advantage. Not only are goals much easier to set, their accomplishment becomes almost automatic. When you are in a position to say: "I'm currently right here, I want to be right there" you will quickly see exactly what actions you need to take and how to take them. This type of clarity will free your mind from worry and confusion, you will become open and receptive to the actions you need to take. Your growth towards the goals you have set will become surprisingly easy.

What Gets Measured, Gets Improved

Another reason that taking a life assessment can be beneficial is the principle of "what gets measured, gets improved." Taking time out every few months to honestly record where you stand helps you set a record of your progress that you can look back on. Being able to see where you were 6 months or 2 years ago will give you an incredible sense of accomplishment.

When you're struggling with a certain area of personal growth down the road, you can look back on the progress you've made in other areas and it helps you see what amazing potential you have to create growth in your life. This kind of momentum can work miracles for you.

It is also important to review your current assessment at least once a week. This, again, will help you recognize what needs improvement. As you get started I recommend keeping a journal (I keep one on the computer, but you can also use a physical journal) that you can record your

assessments in. This way you have easy access to review your past assessments and monitor your current position to keep you focused.

Taking Your Life Assessment

There's no foolproof system for honestly determining where you stand in life. Many people have promoted various systems, questionnaires, and tests to help people figure out their current situation, but I have found success using a more basic approach.

You first break your life down into the following six areas:

Health - Physical exercise, diet, weigh and any health problems.

Work/Career - Fulfillment and impact made through work.

Finances - Income, spending habits, debt, expenses.

Relationships/Family - Family, intimate relationships, social abilities, and friends.

Spirituality - Religious beliefs, meditation abilities, and mental clarity.

Emotions - Overall happiness in life, ability to handle difficulties, mood control.

Feel free to add other specific areas that are important to you (for example if you were an artist you may want to track artistic ability as well), but these are the main six. Once you have these six headlines listed in your journal, you will record two pieces of information under each: Current Assessment and Current Skill Level.

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The Current Assessment is an emotionless observation of this area of your life; where you are, what you have and what you do not have. Current Skill Level is a judgement of your abilities in this area. These don't need to be too long, one solid paragraph for each observation should be enough.

The value of this model is that in addition to simply recording your current position, you are also assessing your abilities and skills in each area, which will prove valuable as you begin to set goals and pursue growth. You'll quickly see what you need to brush up on. You may notice that communication skills, for example, are lacking. This is a great opportunity to read books or attend workshops on the subject of communication.

I recommend doing this exercise away from your home and your everyday life, possibly on a vacation or some place close by that you find peaceful and relaxing. At the very least, make sure you're in a quiet room where you won't be disturbed during the process.

Before you begin the exercise you may feel that there are certain areas where you don't have a strong desire to grow, it's still important to complete all six areas. These six pieces of your life are like a chain, if you neglect one link the whole chain becomes much weaker. Ignoring your health, for example, can cause many complications down the road that can prevent your from accomplishing your goals of making an impact through your career.

Being Honest With Yourself

For many of us, our ego likes to see itself as much more successful/sexy/powerful than it really is. Almost unknowingly, our subconscious minds may create truths in this exercise that are, well, exaggerations to say the least. It's important to watch out for this possibility. There are two effective ways of making sure that you're staying honest with yourself.

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First, once you're complete with the assessment ask yourself the following question for each item "Is this statement true based on how I have acted in the last seven days?" By limiting yourself to a very specific period of time, it forces you to think of your specific past actions rather than what you may "hope" you act like.

Second, if you have doubts, ask someone who knows you well and will tell you the truth. You may think that you're extremely happy, while your wife who listens to you grumble and complain all day may see things differently. These individuals will be able to give you insights that you have not seen. Make it a practice to ask someone supportive and honest when you have a question about yourself, you'll be surprised at what others can see that you may have missed.

Once you've compiled the assessment of your current situation and your skill level in all six areas, be sure to date it and keep it in a journal or notebook where you will have easy access to it. Remember to constantly (at least once per week) review your most recent assessment. This will keep your thoughts directed towards the areas that need growth in your life.

You Will Never be Complete

If you do this exercise right, you should find at least some imperfect observations and lacking skills in all six areas – this is fine! The point here is not to be perfect, in fact the more imperfections you find, the more opportunity for growth you have. How would it feel to do this exercise and recognize that you're perfect in every area – what would you do with the rest of your life? Just simply record your assessment accurately and without emotions. Even if you're not ready to make a change, you must first be true and honest with yourself. It's fine to recognize a problem and admit that you're not big enough to make a change yet, but it's not fine to ignore the problem.

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Taking accurate life assessments is an ongoing process that you can never consider it to be totally complete. It's something that you should perform once every three months to keep a constant record of how quickly you're growing. As you begin to grow in certain areas of your life, these assessments will grow as well. You'll begin to notice new areas in which you need to improve that you may have completely missed previously, this is you becoming a bigger and stronger individual.

It's virtually impossible to attain any real results in your life without first completely and honestly understanding where you stand right now. Take some time over the next 24 hours to create your life assessment. With your life clearly laid out in front of you, you'll begin to feel a new sense of power on your journey towards success.

Part II: Purposeful Decision Making

Life can seem like a constant struggle for some. They get out of bed, recognize how they don't have what we truly want in life, become unhappy or angry with their situation, and repeat day after day. Every once in a while they may muster up enough courage to set an audacious goal to change...but within a week or two they're back to where they have been for years.

There are others who wake up every day with a smile, ready for any challenges that come their way. These individuals seem to have a knack for succeeding with the goals they set, no matter what they set out to accomplish, it somehow gets completed.

The difference between these two groups of people is not luck, not special talents, or any other skill. It simply comes down to their power to make conscious decisions. The first group feels that they are powerless and accepts life as it comes, the second group embraces the control they have to decide the course of their life.

From The Inside Out

You may look at yourself in the mirror and think that you're overweight, you're broke financially, you don't have any fulfilling relationships, etc. All of these things may be 100% true as you see yourself, this is the person that you're physically looking at and observing. But what you may not recognize is that you choose to be this person. Every day of your life you woke up and, in some way or another, made the decisions that the broke or overweight person would make.

This can be a difficult concept to accept, but it's the truth. No one ate that cheeseburger for you, no one else made poor choices that got you in debt. Even for seemingly "bad luck" like

getting in a car accident, no one else made you get in the car that was in the accident. If you look deep enough, you'll see that every single outcome in your life is the direct result of a decision you've made.

This can be wonderful news or this can be slightly depressing news, depending on the quality of your past choices. Either way, isn't it amazing to know that we have that much control over our lives? If you've been pretending that your problems are not your fault, "I have fat genes, nothing I can do about it" or "my ex-girlfriend took all my money, I didn't spend it," this is an empowering concept, maybe one you're not ready to accept. But at some point during your life, you're going to have to wake up to the idea that your decisions are creating your life.

If you keep getting the same results month after month in your life it's because you're making the same choices month after month. We recognize some aspect of our life, and begin to feel that it's just part of who we are. We internalize it, we become this person on every level. Then we automatically choose to make the decisions that this person would make, which further reinforces that we are this person. This can be a tough cycle to break: we make a choice to eat that cheeseburger, we observe that we've gained weight, we decide that we're fat and what choice would a fat person make? Eat another cheeseburger. The cycle never ends. Unless we consciously decide to make a new choice.

Greatness Comes From The Right Decisions

Too often we're stuck in the cycle described above. This is an unconscious choice, we have no idea we're doing it and that's why it's often difficult to accept. But there is a better way. Once you can recognize the power your choices have, you can begin to direct your mind towards the decisions you'd like to make, towards the decisions that benefit you. Living your life this way opens up a world of possibility in your life.

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If you read a biography of any successful individual throughout history, during at least one point in their life they had to make a conscious choice to be someone that they could not see on the outside. After being cut from the varsity basketball team in 10th grade, he could have said “Oh well, apparently this basketball stuff doesn’t work for me, I’ll just accept that and move on” but Michael Jordan did one thing that many of us don’t do: he made a conscious decision to be who he wanted to be. After being cut by the team, he went to the coaches and worked with them non-stop to be great. Why? It certainly wasn’t because he saw greatness in his results at the time. It was because he chose to be great even when he couldn’t see it on the outside. Our lives are simply the choices we make.

Greatness decides to make a choice and failure allows choices to happen automatically. It’s that simple. If you’re getting results that you do not want, you need to ask yourself what choices you’ve been allowing yourself to make automatically. You will be able to directly trace your current situation in life to the past decisions you’ve made.

There’s a number of reasons why people choose the wrong things. They may be easier, more comfortable, it’s what their parents did, they think God wants them to do it, etc. I would encourage you to take an assessment your whole life (part 1) and then look for areas that you do not want. For each, ask yourself “I chose to be this person, what reason did I have for making this decision?” This will provide insights into the choices you’ve been making and will help you immensely as you begin to make new choices in the future.

Deciding to choose the right things can be difficult, and that’s why most people allow choices to happen to them automatically rather than making a conscious effort to decide the course of their life. Denial of your power can be easier for a while, but eventually you must take responsibility for the life you’ve chosen to create. You alone have built this thing you call your life, whether you like the results or not. It’s time to start building it in a more purposeful way.

The Delay

We make decisions today that affect our future. If we make the same decision today that we made in the past, then the future will be the same as today. If you're broke and you can see this on the outside, this means you chose to be this person on the *inside* long ago and it's now revealed itself to the rest of the world. When you make a new decision in your life, you can't expect instant results.

This is why many people fail after a few days of setting new goals. They have great momentum and willpower for all of 48 hours and when they don't see results they give up and revert to the old easy, automatic choice. You have to put the work on the front-end in order to get results on the back-end. In order to lose weight tomorrow, you have to stop overeating today. It may take weeks before you begin to see a measurable improvement, but with constant dedication, eventually your future will reflect the positive choices you made today.

Goals Are Decisions

I have learned to start thinking of goals as decisions. Instead of saying "I'm setting a new goal" think instead "I'm making a new decision in my life." This model will help you transform the somewhat fuzzy idea of a goal into a solid, concrete change that you can implement.

We often see goals as something that we try to attain, something we strive for and if we're lucky, we'll eventually achieve. Decisions, on the other hand, are much more concrete to us, they're things we just do. You don't set a goal to go the grocery store, you just decide to go. You wouldn't sit in the morning and visualize yourself successfully achieving your grocery store trip, that would be ridiculous. You would just decide to go and when the time comes you would

follow through on your decision. Start taking this approach with your goals and results will come much more quickly.

Through this wonderful tool of conscious decision making we can direct the course of our individual lives and environments. Too many times we deny this opportunity, we ignore our own vast potential. I would encourage to start choosing the things that will create the life that you truly want. To seize this opportunity and live the fullest, most purposeful life you can possibly live.

Part III: The Right Approach to Setting Goals

Goal setting is a topic that has been covered to death by self-help gurus throughout the years. Today, most advice has become stale and ineffective. Yet goal setting is one of the keys to success in any area of personal growth. Without a specific goal, you'll become a wandering generality instead of a meaningful specific. Goals give you a sense of purpose and direction.

In part 3 we will cover a fresh method of setting the goals that are right for you. It will describe a process of setting goals that help you achieve what you truly desire from life. If you've struggled with other systems, this may help you tackle the core problems that have been holding you back.

Let's get started with an example of how this typically works in the business world:

The Misguided Business

One of the key areas of business management is the idea of making a profit. Many business owners think the purpose of their business is to "maximize profits." And this seems reasonable at first, after all, it's what we've always been taught about business, right? A business that makes a lot of money is considered to be successful.

In actuality, profit is simply a limit on the business. The purpose of a business is not to make as much money as it can but to successfully accomplish its objectives. Sure, the objectives of the business might require some profit, but profit can't be the focus. Profit just helps you get where you want to go. Chasing after profit is an illusion that will leave its victims frustrated and confused. In order to earn revenue, a business must be focused on its core mission. And

ironically, when it's able to successfully carry out it's mission, and provide value to it's customers, profitability comes easy.

Which business do you think will be more successful over time: the one that constantly focuses on making a profit at all costs, or the business that understands the contribution it needs to make in order to succeed?

Exactly.

Personal goal setting works in the same way.

Direct vs. Indirect Goals

When we set goals that are just vague ideas with no concrete meaning behind them, it makes it almost impossible to achieve what we want. I call these indirect goals. When we instead drill down to the true result we're looking for and make that our primary objective, it becomes almost impossible not to succeed. These are direct goals.

An indirect goal (like a business trying to maximize profits) is a misty concept, a direct goal is a specific task that you know you can accomplish. This model can take your goals from obscurity to clarity.

For example, suppose you felt like you'd been spending a lot of time at the office and away from your children, and you want to set a new goal that fixes this situation. An indirect goal would take the form of "My goal is to have more time off work." It doesn't explain why, it is simply one possibility to the result you desire. It would be much more wise to set a direct goal that tackles the issue head on: "My goal is to spend quality time with my children."

Another benefit of taking this approach to goal setting is that you become open to a world of possibility. Cutting back on work might not be the answer to spending more time with your children. Maybe it's cutting back on the time spent in front of the television. Maybe it's a combination of both. When you set a direct goal there are multiple paths that you can take to reach your desired result. With so many more opportunities to reach your goal, you have an infinitely higher rate of success.

Sorting Between Direct and Indirect Goals

What if you can't determine whether a specific goal is direct or indirect? It may not be easy to tell the difference on the surface, especially if you've been holding that goal for any length of time. But there's a quick and easy approach to determining if something is truly the end result you're looking for. Ask yourself: what result do I expect from this goal? When you are unable to answer that question any further, you know you've found your true desire.

For example. "My goal is to earn \$1,000,000."

"What result do I expect from earning \$1,000,000?"

"I expect that I will be able to get out of debt"

"What result do I expect from getting out of debt?"

"I will have peace of mind and I won't worry as much"

In this scenario we realized that the goal is actually not to have money it's to have peace of mind. Getting out of debt might be a decent goal to have, but the best goal of all is to aim for inner peace and acceptance. Chasing after money won't solve this individual's problems. In fact,

earning \$1,000,000 at this stage of their life would probably add more worry and difficulty than they had to begin with. Even getting out of debt isn't sure to tackle the issue of having peace. The best option here is to set a goal centered on improving inner peace.

If you've been struggling with a goal for any length of time, chances are it's a goal that you do not truly want. Ask yourself what results you expect from accomplishing this goal and make that answer your new goal. You will become more fulfilled and results will start to come your way much more quickly.

A Simple, Effective Approach to Goals

One of the great things about this method of goal setting is that it's very simple. I'm a firm believer that the simplest things in life are often the most powerful. This method doesn't require folders or workbooks, or expensive time management systems.

Once you have worked down to your direct goals, I only recommend one more step: write them on a small index card and read over them several times per day. This will keep your mind focused and constantly working towards solutions and actions you can take to achieve your desires.

Starting your path towards personal growth without a goal is like setting sail without a compass. It's obvious that you can never hope to attain anything in your life without first determining what results you'd like to achieve. Writing down some surface level goal that you think you should want is easy, but even if you succeed it won't make you happy. Setting meaningful goals begins with determining what your core desires and values are, only then can you begin to set goals that will lead you on the path to growth and success.

Part IV: Using The Law of Attraction

If you've ever set goals, diligently visualized them and yet failed to get results, you're not alone. Many people have picked up a self-help book or movie and confidently set new intentions only to realize lackluster results down the road. This has happened in my life on several occasions until I discovered the real "secret" to the law of attraction.

The law of attraction is all the rage these days, movies like *The Secret* have portrayed it to be some magical genie that grants your wishes. Essentially they send the message that if you think something, it will come true. People love to hear this and it sells books, seminars and DVDs. The problem is, it doesn't work that way.

I believe that for the most part, these self-help gurus do know how to properly use the law of attraction, but they're failing to convey the most important aspects of it. They're keeping the real secret of *The Secret* a secret. These true aspects aren't quite as sexy to advertise because they take effort, but they work.

How Attraction Really Works

The idea that things are attracted to you by your thoughts is not accurate. Try going to a dark room and thinking hard about having a million dollars dropped on your doorstep...good luck!

Instead, things are attracted to you by the vibrational energy within you. This energy is much more than just thought, it's your core being, the person that you are right now. If you try to pour water into oil, they won't mix well because on a core level, they're not the same. This principle applies to intentions as well, if you are acting like oil and your goal is water, it's just not

going to happen. The solution, then, is to change who you are to match the oil and results will be coming to you quickly.

The law is that whatever energy frequency you're on, things on that frequency will be attracted back to you and you to them.

Changing Your Core Frequency

The frequency of who you are is like a radio wave, in order to hear the music you have to tune your dial to the right station. Changing your frequency is the same as changing the dial. You may currently be on a very different station than the one of your goals, so you're getting very different playback in your life.

Changing this dial in our lives involves changing who we are, our being. It goes far beyond just thinking a thought. You have your current results in life because of the person that you are. Change who you are and you will have different results. It's that simple.

But how do you change who you are? You can't pretend to do something or trick yourself into believing something that isn't real. My problem with visualization is that when you intend something by visualizing, you're drawing that visualization into your life, not the thing itself! For example, have you noticed that when you intend something you always see it around you? You may want a new car, so you start visualizing this car and it pops up all around your environment.

Some think this is great, as if it's "working" but in reality it already has worked, you got what you were intending. This means that to attract something into your life you don't need to see it – you need to BE it. Want a beautiful relationship? BE that relationship on every level of your

being. Want a Mercedes? BE that Mercedes on every level of your being. Want to lose 25 pounds? BE that healthier person on every level of your being.

A How To

You may be wondering, “Ok, but how do I ‘BE’ a car or a relationship?” It’s really all about becoming your future self that is aligned with this goal. If your desire is to have a more loving relationship, you need to become that person who is more loving. You need to connect with that person and begin to exhibit the characteristics, thoughts, feelings, and actions of this new person. Let me give you a quick step-by-step for doing this:

1. Physically experience whatever it is you want to attract, if even for a moment. Go to that new neighborhood, drive the car, wear the suit (and if this isn’t possible, immerse yourself in it until you understand the details – watch videos, read information, etc.). The point here is to get a strong, detailed understanding of this goal. You can’t attract something if you don’t know what it is.
2. Sit quietly for a few minutes and just feel your breathing become relaxed. Block out other thoughts and vibrations. In essence, quiet down your current vibrational status.
3. Then, take the pieces of this goal (that you gathered in step 1) and begin to accept them as a reality in your life. Understand that those things are you and are part of you. Start to think and feel the thoughts and feelings of this goal. What will you be doing when it’s accomplished? What does it look like? What song will you be listening to? Be as specific as possible.
4. Do this for 15-30 minutes as often as you can; a minimum of once every day and you will begin to associate yourself with this goal.

If all is going well, results will probably begin to show up quickly. There's a good chance that if you're able to accurately connect with these vibrations, it will begin to happen fast. You'll start to see inexplicable people/places/things just fall into your life along the lines of your vision.

This speed factor can be a valuable feedback tool: if your desires aren't coming in a reasonable period of time, you're probably doing something wrong and it would be wise to take a look at how in tune you really are with your goals.

When I discovered this method of using the law of attraction, I noticed results coming much more quickly and accurately than the typical method of thinking about my goals over and over. If you're struggling to realize your intentions despite your best efforts, try implementing these changes into your understanding of the Law of Attraction.

Part V: Taking Action in the Now

Once you've committed to the changes you would like to make in your life, there's one final step: taking action on a daily basis in order to bring your goals into reality. In this final chapter on *The Essentials of Personal Growth*, we'll be discussing how to get up on Monday morning and move into action. So far we've gone over how to take the right assessment, set the right goals, visualize in the right way, and finally we need to take a look at how to do the right things.

Your Success Lives In The Action

The first principle of action that we must understand is that you can never succeed tomorrow and you can never count on the successes of yesterday to help you today. In order to follow through with your goals and achieve the success you desire, you must take action in this moment.

As the famous sign in a London park reads, *Free beer tomorrow.*

We have all set goals, we have all dreamed of success; but why do only some of us achieve? If you take a look at those who have succeeded in their lives, there is one glaring difference between these individuals and those who fail: their ability to take action each day, even when they don't necessarily want to. They understand that they will never have another moment but this one, and if they are to succeed, it will happen now or never.

The Daily Six

There are many systems (most of which are expensive and complex) that promise to keep you focused on taking action towards your goals. However, there is one easy to learn system that has been proven to work extremely well for over 100 years. It's called the Daily Six.

The Daily Six simply consists of writing down 6 actions that need to be completed this day in order to move closer to your goals.

The process works like this: each evening, take a piece of paper and write out the 6 things you need to accomplish tomorrow in order to reach your goals. Then put them in order based on importance. When the morning comes, you dig right into item #1. When it's complete, you move on to number 2 and so on until you have completed all 6. If item number 1 takes you all day, then the next 5 are added to the top of the list for tomorrow.

Your Daily Six should only include items that will help you move closer to your goals, and you may want to read over your goals just before creating your Daily Six each evening. This will ensure that everything you are accomplishing is truly bringing you nearer to your success. While this system is no substitute for the discipline required to follow through, it does help you stay focused on the right actions every day.

In this guide we have traveled through 5 vital steps to help you move closer to true, lasting personal growth. But ultimately, success with any system boils down to your ability to wake up each day and do the right things. One of the most powerful ways to accomplish this is the Daily Six method. Remember, a goal without action is simply a dream. In order create any positive growth in your life, you must take action in this moment, because this moment is all you will ever have.

About This Guide

The Essentials of Personal Growth was created by **Andrew Olson** for his personal blog, **BlogAndrew.com** where he writes on the subjects of personal growth, business, finance and investing, dealmaking, and success. Be sure to visit: www.BlogAndrew.com for more free resources.

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