

Career Success Strategies

10 Steps to Jump Start Your Career

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By Conrad Brian Law

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Forward

I wrote this workbook on Career Success Strategies for four reasons. My primary objective is to share what I have learned. The second is my realization that the process of career advancement has changed drastically but many of us haven't noticed the change, all will benefit from an updated definition. Thirdly, I am uniquely qualified to be your guide in this endeavor because I have lived, experienced, and thrived as a result of creating strategies to advance my career. Lastly, I hope to inspire those that feel they have no direct access to the American Dream. I hope this guide will provide information to demonstrate and facilitate what each of us is capable of.

I. Personal Experiences Illustrate A Model

As a result of my personal experiences I've discovered powerful yet simple principles that empower us to create opportunities to succeed. The significance of the discovery is that the knowledge of these principles alone, is not enough. Though they are common sense, they are not common practice. These principles of career advancement compel me to share them with others. I developed the tools from my personal experience into a career advancement model that I share. My original perceptions were derived from my experiences as a laborer, a counselor for emotionally challenged youth, a clerk, an economist, an EEO counselor, a quality assurance analyst, a computer specialist, and as an adult education trainer with over 17 years of experience. Since 1994, the model has been presented to thousands at conferences and other events and has evolved into a universal tool that applies to all aspects of work. The feedback I receive from workshop participants has helped the model evolve to universal principles. Everyone has performed activities in this book, but no one has put them in a model such as this.

I started my career in 1980 as a clerk. I ultimately advanced my career at a rapid rate once I reached the rank of professional in my organization, but some of the individuals I worked with were still clerks. In 1994 I began exploring the question that many had asked me. How was I able to advance my career so quickly? I wanted to know the answer to another question. Why didn't everyone else? As I looked back on the things that I had done, I generalized them into categories and developed a tool I called the Career Advancement Model. I was proud of myself and wanted to share what I had created but I realized that I didn't do anything special. Most of what I did was common sense. I soon realized they were not common practice. My model did not require special skills. But, why didn't everyone do what I did? As I searched for the missing ingredient, I discovered that what I did involved risk. I spoke up, I challenged, I volunteered to do what others were not willing to do. That missing ingredient was a healthy dose of high self-esteem. I believed in myself and knew I was supposed to succeed.

II. Up-The-Ladder Career Advancement

Up-the-ladder career advancement, the process of working in one position, for one employer, until you retire is no longer the accepted practice. Since 1980 this type of relationship between company and employee has become a thing of the past. Today the variables that affect career

advancement decisions and opportunities include stability, employee desires, changes in technology, changes in business processes, increased competition, and thinking outside the box.

Stability: Back in the day, an employee would remain with one company their entire career, they would typically stay in the same or a related department doing pretty much the same job, utilizing the same skills that they started with. In manufacturing companies the technology and skill requirements were consistent. Companies did not want to lose the investment they had made in training their employees. The company took care of employees that did what the company told them to do. Changes in the relationship between employee and company reduced the stability and complacency of both parties. These changes include new technologies and new ways of doing business.

Employee Desires: With the advent of the "I" generation, many of us began to focus on what's important to me. A lack of job satisfaction motivated many to seek out other opportunities. We are now more willing to seek what makes us happy. Alternative work schedules are a direct result of employees realizing that there was more to life than work. Employees under 35 find it easier to adapt than those over 45. Older employees also find it harder to start over again and usually take a cut in pay.

Changes In Technology: New technologies require other changes including mandatory training of staff to use the new equipment or processes. Senior staff are paid large salaries, resist change and contribute little to adopting new technologies. Companies find it easier to hire students right out of college or high school, and pay them less while they contribute more.

Changes in Business Processes: The 1990s were called "the decade of downsizing". Not only did companies realize they could be more productive with less staff properly utilizing technology, they also were required to change the way they operated to remain competitive. This trend continues in the new millenium.

Increased Competition: Other changes that affected this trend included increased competition through improved transportation services, mail delivery service and fax technology. "Overnight Delivery" created competition by allowing small companies to offer products and services to businesses and consumers across the country offering the same benefits as the company down the street. A rural business in Indiana does not have the overhead of a downtown New York City company. They pass on the reduced costs. The Internet is the most recent development in this trend of competition, and has truly taken on a global perspective.

Thinking Outside the Box: Companies that have been able to adapt to these trends have been able to thrive. There is also a new group of individuals that have adapted to thrive in this environment. By looking beyond the narrow view of what their responsibilities are and seeking professional training to equip them for the struggle, these courageous ones have advanced faster with higher levels of compensation than others who work within the existing business model. These employees have been able to advance faster by moving between departments within their organization and with other companies.

III. The Evolution of Career Success

The third reason for writing this book is to define the transformation of career success itself. Never before have there been so many employment options and opportunities. Career advancement for one individual might mean working from home without being required to commute an hour or two into a large metropolitan area. For another it might be a job opportunity that requires constant international travel. Family friendly companies, self-employment, flexible and alternative work schedules provide opportunities just as significant as monetary and managerial increases. Many of us do not realize that career advancement is really about achieving what it is that you truly desire from life.

IV. Universal Access to the American Dream

People come here from all over the world searching for a better life. Our streets are paved with gold. With hard work, motivation, and determination, you can accomplish anything. You have to believe in the dream before you can believe in yourself.

A young girl arrived in this country four years ago from a South American country. She didn't speak English. She graduated as the valedictorian of her high school with the class of 2001. She chose to overcome that which might stop her from achieving her dreams.

We come equipped with that which we need to succeed, but we take it for granted. The American Dream is not a gift, it is not something to pick up as you pass go. It is an opportunity to access the tools and resources you need to accomplish anything you desire.

America is not fair. Neither is life. Now that you realize it, get over it and go on with yours. I hope you find this workbook useful in your journey.

I have discussed the American Dream with Asian, African, and Hispanic Americans. For those that buy into the dream they follow the rules. To get a good mortgage rate, make a bigger down payment than you should have to. To live in a better neighborhood, get a house with other families. For those that don't buy in, these difficulties and others are beyond their control.

What You Should Know About Career Success

Job Satisfaction

Millions of workers are dissatisfied with their jobs, feel the work is not important, and think they should be paid more. They also feel helpless to change their job situation. Why would someone feel that way and not take steps to rectify their problem? Most of us are resistant to change because it requires that we move outside of our comfort zone. We spend much of our lives trying to reduce the amount of anxiety we feel. ***One way to reduce anxiety is to not take chances or risk full effort.*** Efforts to succeed in the workforce are directly related to how we feel about ourselves and what we are willing to attempt. The hardest worker is not often the highest paid worker.

Surveys show that adult Americans fear speaking in front of an audience. Many of us do it anyway. We feel nervous and anxious but see our way through it. We believe in ourselves. ***When you believe, you are willing to take chances, make changes, and risk failure. Even if you do not succeed at a particular task, you see failure as a setback, not a definition of self worth.*** Through thought provoking insights, reality-checks and practical activities, this book will help you to understand the importance of self-esteem and acquire the tools required to create success in the workplace and in life.

The relationship between company and employee has changed drastically over the last twenty years. Up-The-Ladder Career Advancement, the process of being promoted by moving from one position to another in the same department, doing related work, is no longer standard practice for career building. Instead of waiting until a position becomes available when someone retires or management decides that you are ready and worthy, the best opportunities to advance are created. ***As companies continue to downsize, opportunities for promotion and keeping your job are more competitive.*** Through the 1990's those that have achieved the greatest levels of advancement have done so by learning new skills and changing jobs.

Career advancement should not to be confused with career development. Nor is career advancement only about making more money. Career development activities help make you a better employee and more marketable. They do not show you how to get a promotion. Career advancement focuses on the activities that will increase your income and improve the conditions where you work. Career advancement can be about stock options, alternative work schedules, working for a family-friendly company, travel, or just working five minutes from the house.

Many workers are under employed, they make less than they need to live the lifestyle they desire. The median weekly earnings of the 99.9 million full-time wage and salary workers in the United States was \$595 for the second quarter 2001, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics employment data released in July. The average annual salary for these workers is \$31,535. Currently, 50 million full-time workers 16 and older make \$31,535 per year or less.

With a salary of \$31,535 you can purchase a house for \$75,000 if you can find one. Your monthly payment will be at least \$700, assuming that you have \$5,000 to commit to closing costs and down payment. Your credit must be perfect and you can't have any other major expenses, not even a car payment. The average cost of a home in the United States is approximately \$125,000. When we think of achieving the American dream, we think of a decent home and a nice car. This dream that we grew up believing appears to be more of a fantasy than a reality. But it is really just a matter of your perspective.

Responsibility, Change, Work, Money, Time, and People

Now that you understand my purpose for writing this workbook, I'd like to share things that you know about Responsibility, Change, Work, Money, Time, and People.

Responsibility: You are affected by anything and everything that happens to you in life. More importantly, you are responsible for what you do with your life. When bad things happen to us, we often attribute blame to something that we have no control over. ***When we place blame on others, we give up control of our lives.*** Most people accept the reality that is created for them. This line from the movie, "The Truman Show" identifies how many of us live our lives, we seldom question the things that happen to us day to day. We accept them. If we take responsibility for what happens to us, we are in a position to take steps to remedy any situation. (But, you already knew this.)

Change: ***Many of us are not comfortable with change.*** Some of us fear change. There are many instances when we stay in a job or a relationship that we don't want, need or that we know is destructive, simply because we are more afraid of the unknown discomfort that we might experience as opposed to the discomfort that we know. We stay in a bad situation sometimes. (You knew this too.)

Work: Many of us dislike our job. Yet, those of us that dislike our job may stay in the same exact position for years. Oddly enough, if most of us that dislike our job, went to work tomorrow and found that our salary had been tripled, we would no longer dislike our job, at least for a while. I bet you knew this one and wish it would happen to you. Money is a powerful incentive. (If you gotta go to work, you might as well get paid; well paid.)

Money: Money, contrary to popular opinion, is not the root of all evil. Money allows you to expand your opportunities. Money contributes to the choices that we have in life. Where we live, how we live, what we eat, and how we spend our leisure time, or how much leisure time we have are directly related to the money that we have at our disposal. Money creates opportunities and gives you choices. (All of your children knew this one.)

Time: Time is finite, you can't make more of it. There are 60 minutes in an hour and 24 hours in a day. The best that you can hope to do is learn to manage it so that you can accomplish more with it. How much TV do you watch in a day? The To-Do-List is an instrument to prioritize what we do with our time and an inventory of how our time is actually spent will help us recover time that would otherwise be wasted. (You probably already knew that too).

People: There are different types of people in our lives that influence the things we do. Some are positive and others are negative. Negative people tell us that we can't accomplish our dreams. In order to succeed, it is important that you minimize their impact in your life. This is especially difficult if the negative people in your life are those closest to you, which is typically the case. Friends, family, spouse and others we care about have a powerful effect on us. The positive people in our lives are the ones that support our efforts to reach our goals. They also help us keep grounded in being realistic about achieving them. To the extent possible we need to minimize the influence of negative people in our lives and surround ourselves with positive influences. Besides, most of us have no problem talking ourselves out of believing that we can achieve our dreams, anyway. We don't need any help doing that. And I know you knew that.

What all of these topics have in common is the effect that self esteem has on them. ***Our willingness to take on new challenges and reach for our dreams are directly related to the self-esteem that we possess.***

What is Self-Esteem?

Self-esteem is pride in oneself; self-respect. It is how we feel about our self and what we believe about our self. Traditionally there have been two types of self-esteem. They are low and high.

The characteristics of low self-esteem include:

- Slow to volunteer.
- Focus on their fears and worries.
- Often shy and withdrawn.
- At the other extreme, loud and boisterous.
- Have lists of ways to get out of doing things
- Reluctant to risk full effort.
- Saves face by saying, "Who cares?"
- Will lie and cheat to avoid challenges.

The characteristics of high self-esteem include:

- Works cooperatively with others.
- Usually have a wide circle of friends.
- Are open to the ideas of others.
- Are not overly concerned with what others think about them.
- Takes pride in their accomplishments and are creative.
- Takes responsibility for their actions.
- Are generally aware of their strengths and weaknesses.
- Attribute their success to their own abilities and efforts.
- Are not afraid to express their opinions.
- Tend to be selected as leaders.
- Generally have an optimistic view of life.

I have found that self-esteem is not this simple. The truest test of high self-esteem and truly believing in your self is accomplishing your goals and dreams. If most of us listed our dreams and goals on one piece of paper and the ones that we accomplish on another. The paper with our accomplishments would be the shorter list.

For one thing, many of our dreams and goals are mutually exclusive, it would be difficult to be a brain surgeon and a professional basketball player. Another reason for the discrepancy is that we lie to ourselves and believe that our self-esteem is higher than what it really is.

People with high self-esteem need not brag about themselves, don't care if they get credit for helping others, and are willing to help others, not because their asked, but because they are in a position to help without adversely affecting themselves.

Positive activities that make you feel good about yourself are a great way to improve your self-image. Activities performed for the sake of others without reward or acknowledgement also build character and self-esteem.

Look in the mirror and ask yourself, "How well do I like myself?" You may be surprised what you might find.

Realizing Our Potential

As humans, we have a unique ability that separates us from the lower animals and make us capable of great things. It is the ability to change or re-invent ourselves. Our capacity for learning and looking at ourselves from different points of view gives us what we need to identify changes that need to be made in our personality, lifestyle, health, and career. ***By changing what we are, we can become what we want to be or stop being that which we shouldn't be.*** Again, the capacity is there but it may take a long time to realize or tap into it.

Factors such as environment, family, genetics, experience and society influence each of us in different ways. The negative effect of these factors can be minimized through education and the realization that they exist. In this chapter we will examine America's promise, unlimited opportunities and raw potential.

Twenty Dollars of Sense

Author Unknown

A well known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. In the room of 200, he asked, "Who would like this \$20 bill?" Hands started going up. He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you but first, let me do this." He proceeded to crumple the dollar bill up. He then asked, "Who still wants it?" Still the hands were up in the air. "Well," he replied, "What if I do this?" And he dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now all crumpled and dirty. "Now, who still wants it?" Still the hands went into the air.

My friends, you have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20.

Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value.

You are special - Don't ever forget it! Please pass this on to everyone in your address book. You will never know the lives it may touch, the hurting hearts it speaks to, or the hope that it can bring.

"Never let yesterday's disappointments overshadow tomorrow's dreams."

Our Gift

Conrad Brian Law

Ninety-five percent of us do not set life goals. Goals hold us responsible and make us accountable. We'd rather do without them. Without goals it is difficult to fail but it is also difficult to succeed. Most individuals surveyed over the age of ninety, regret that they did not do more with their life. They wish they had tried harder to accomplish their dreams. It is at that time of we realize that the things we don't get out of life are our responsibility. We run out of excuses for not achieving our dreams.

We all have access to a gift that most of us don't realize until we reach the end of our days. When mortality stares us in the face we look at what we have dreamed and what we have accomplished. Most of us will be very disappointed. If you knew you would die tomorrow, what would you regret?

All around us ordinary people do extraordinary things after being challenged by life. There is a gift that we can tap into if we try. The gift is the ability to make our dreams come true through hard work, motivation, and action. We can reinvent ourselves to bring our dreams alive. I don't know where it comes from or why it is here. I just know that it exists. The gift has always been here. Most of us fail to realize this until too late.

An individual that personified this struggle was Helen Keller. She was born in Tuscumbia, Alabama on June 27, 1880. At the age of 19 months, she lost her sight and hearing as a result of meningitis. By the age of eight she had learned to communicate with the help of her teacher Anne Sullivan. She became the first blind-deaf person to effectively communicate with the sighted and hearing world.

Helen Keller grew into a world famous, highly intelligent, articulate and sensitive woman who wrote, spoke and labored incessantly for the betterment of others. After graduating college in 1904, she spent her life dedicated to the betterment of others.

We take so much for granted. Don't we?

A True Champion

By Carole Yamaguchi

As told to Anita Gogno

When our second child was born, Jim and I thought she was perfect, but the doctor pointed out that her feet were turned inward. "Left uncorrected, it would be a problem," he told us.

We vowed to do anything we could to help our baby. When only two weeks old, I brought her back to the doctor, just as he had directed, and the doctor put her tiny feet into casts, her precious baby toes just barely visible. Because she was growing, I had to take her back to the doctor every two weeks to have each foot recast.

Eventually the casting was finished and it was time for corrective shoes and bars. Jim and I watched with hope and concern as she struggled to walk. Those first, awkward steps made us so proud. By the time she entered preschool, her steps appeared quite normal. Encouraged by her progress, we looked for something else to help strengthen her lower body.

As it turned out, she loved the ice!

When she turned six, we enrolled her in skating lessons and soon she was gliding like a swan. We watched in wonderment as she skimmed the ice. She wasn't the fastest nor the most coordinated skater. She had to work hard at every new movement, but she loved the ice and her dedication paid off.

At fifteen, she competed in both pairs skating and the ladies' singles at the 1988 World Junior Championships in Australia, winning both events! At the senior World Championships in 1991, she won the ladies' singles. Then we found ourselves filled with love and admiration in France, at the 1992 Winter Olympics, as our daughter, Kristi Yamaguchi won the gold medal.

I thought back to the early years of challenge for Kristi - the years of fear for us as her parents, and the same years of frustration for her as a child who simply wanted to walk; the endless doctor visits; the arduous first baby steps with bars and corrective shoes. During those years, we didn't expect gold medals and a stunning professional career ahead of her. We stood in awe of Kristi herself, respecting her strength and dedication, and how far she had come on two tiny feet that had once been bound in heavy casts. In our eyes, Kristi had always walked with the grace of a true champion.

America, The Land of Opportunity

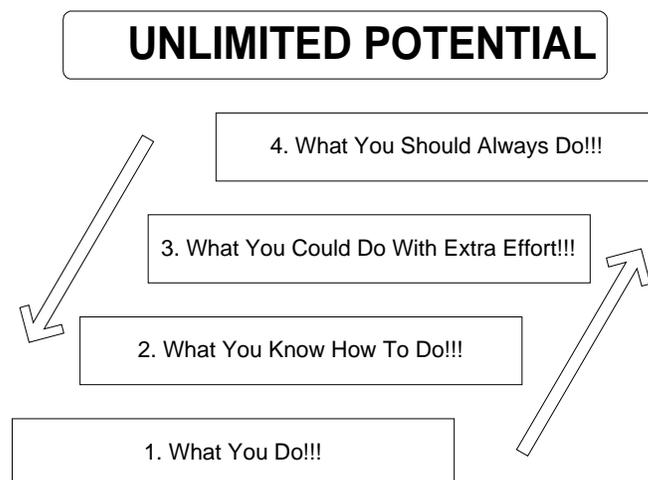
It is said that in the United States opportunities are unlimited. You can be anything you want to be and do anything that you want to do here. Anyone can succeed if they work hard. While these are valid statements, they over simplify the truth. If you can tap into your potential, you will acquire all that you need to accomplish what you strive for.

The lessons we learned about this country in history class taught us about how important equality was from the very beginning. We learned that each person would have one vote. In college I learned that what they meant was if you were a male, preferably of European descent, and owned a certain amount of land/property, you could vote. Through this lesson in American history we learn the value of perceptions and the truths that lie beneath. When your mind is opened to these truths without judgement, fear or anger; you can focus more clearly on where you want to fit in.

Unlimited Potential

Our greatest gift is our ability to grow beyond our current capacity. Each of us has access to a limitless supply of potential within our reach. To prove that this unlimited potential exists, let us look at what we are.

There are four Whats that determine how far we can go. First there is the **What We Do**. These are the activities that we perform, how we act, where we go, the decisions that we make. Second is the **What We Know How to Do**. We all know how to do things that we don't quite get around to doing. We know how to apply for other jobs but we don't. Sometimes we say we don't have enough time or there were events beyond our control. It comes down to, we didn't do it. The third What is the **What We Could Do**. This is what we could do if we tried a little harder, if we took additional training, if we had a few more hours in the day or got up earlier in the morning. Fourth is the **What You Should Do**. By doing more than what you do and by learning more than what you know, you can utilize the potential that only you possess.



Life Long Learning

The definition of life long learning is the realization that learning isn't something that we stop doing when we graduate from high school or college. More now than ever before as the jobs that we once have change from paper pushing and factory assembly lines to technology that changes rapidly itself, there is a greater need to increase our knowledge and adapt to our surroundings.

Learning can be structured or informal. We can develop skills in college or through on-the-job training. For independent learning you can use audiocassettes, video tapes, online INTERNET, computer-based training and books. There are more tools for learning than ever before but most of us don't take advantage of it. There are many choices about how to learn, we must spend a significant amount of time to determine what we should learn.

The greatest challenge to education is our attitude towards learning. There is no guarantee that what you learn will improve the quality of your life. If your attitude is negative it is easy to convince yourself that there is no value to learning nor investing in your education financially. The commitment of time and money to pursue and education is often enough to help you talk yourself out of it. In the twenty-one years since I graduated from college, my most valuable lesson is that I was able to complete it. The accomplishment of my degree helped me realize that I should succeed.

We have often heard, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks." This may have been acceptable in the past, but not any longer. You must continue to learn, but make sure that what your learning is worthwhile.

The Importance of Self-Esteem

A simple question without a simple answer. Self-esteem is our feeling of self worth. The characteristics of low self-esteem include being slow to volunteer, focusing on fears and worries, being shy and withdrawn, sometimes loud and boisterous. Individuals with low self esteem also have lists of ways to get out of doing things, are reluctant to risk full effort, try to save face by saying "Who cares?" and will lie and cheat to avoid challenges.

The characteristics of high self-esteem include working cooperatively with others, being comfortable with a wide circle of friends, being open to the ideas of others, not being overly concerned with what others think about you, and taking pride in your accomplishments. Individuals with high self esteem are generally aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, attribute their success to their own abilities and efforts, are not afraid to express their opinions, and tend to be selected as leaders (but if not selected, will volunteer).

Twenty years ago as a clerk, I began my government career. I was able to advance at a rapid rate into a variety of professional positions but some of the individuals I worked with as a clerk are still clerks. About six years ago I sought an answer to a question many had asked me. How was I able to advance my career? I sought the answer to an additional question. Why didn't everyone else? As I looked back on the things that I had done, I generalized them into categories and

developed a tool I called the Career Advancement Model. I was proud of myself and wanted to share what I had created but I realized that I didn't do anything special. Most of what I did was common sense. I soon realized that they were not common practice. My model did not require special skills. So, why didn't everyone do what I did? As I searched for the missing ingredient, I discovered that what I did involved risk. I spoke up, I challenged, I volunteered to do what others were not willing to do. That missing ingredient was high self-esteem. I knew I could succeed. I spent my energy on finding out how, instead of wondering if I could or fearing failure.

In the workplace, the importance of self-esteem manifests itself by an individual's willingness and ability to get involved with the organization. Even to care about what is best for the organization. This means standing up for the right things even if you are the only one standing. You have to be willing to be involved in activities that draw attention to yourself. That means taking on projects that no one wants because it is too difficult or the appropriate resources are lacking. You know that you will acquire the skills and the resources that are needed to complete the project. You must also be willing to let management know what you need them to do to support your efforts. You can't be afraid of being criticized, you will be no matter what you do. It's human nature. It's better to be criticized for doing something than for doing nothing.

College, An Unfair Advantage?

Yes, when I started my career as a clerk I had already graduated from college with a degree in Sociology and Archaeology. I had an unfair advantage. There were others in the clerical ranks with college degrees also. My degree provided me with no usable skills. The most significant benefit from college was my ability to get a degree. By getting a degree, any degree it demonstrated that I could succeed. I accomplished something many others did not. What I am trying to say is, "I had a boost in my self-esteem by graduating from college." It is that boost, not the degree that makes the real difference. In this high tech society the skills and education that you acquire are more important than the degree. There are many individuals with degrees that are not successful and many without degrees that are. Don't let not having a degree get in the way of your success.

Affirmations

affirmation n 1: a statement asserting the existence or the truth of something 2: a solemn declaration that serves the same purpose as an oath

An affirmation is the context that I am using it is a statement about our selves that we want to be true. It is part of the process of re-inventing one's self. Before you can become, you must visualize yourself as the person you want to be. Affirmations help us nullify some of the negativity that surrounds us all. Much of the negativity comes from those we care about the most. It also comes from within. No one has ever been able to talk me out of doing something as well as I can.

I am a capable individual; I am a worthy person; I am success, my potential is unlimited.

Part I

The New Career Advancement Model

During the eighties, companies downsized the number of employees to reduce overhead, among other things. The trend continues. Often thousands of employees are laid off. Up-The-Ladder Career Advancement no longer guarantees your place in the company, the relationship between employee and employer is different now.

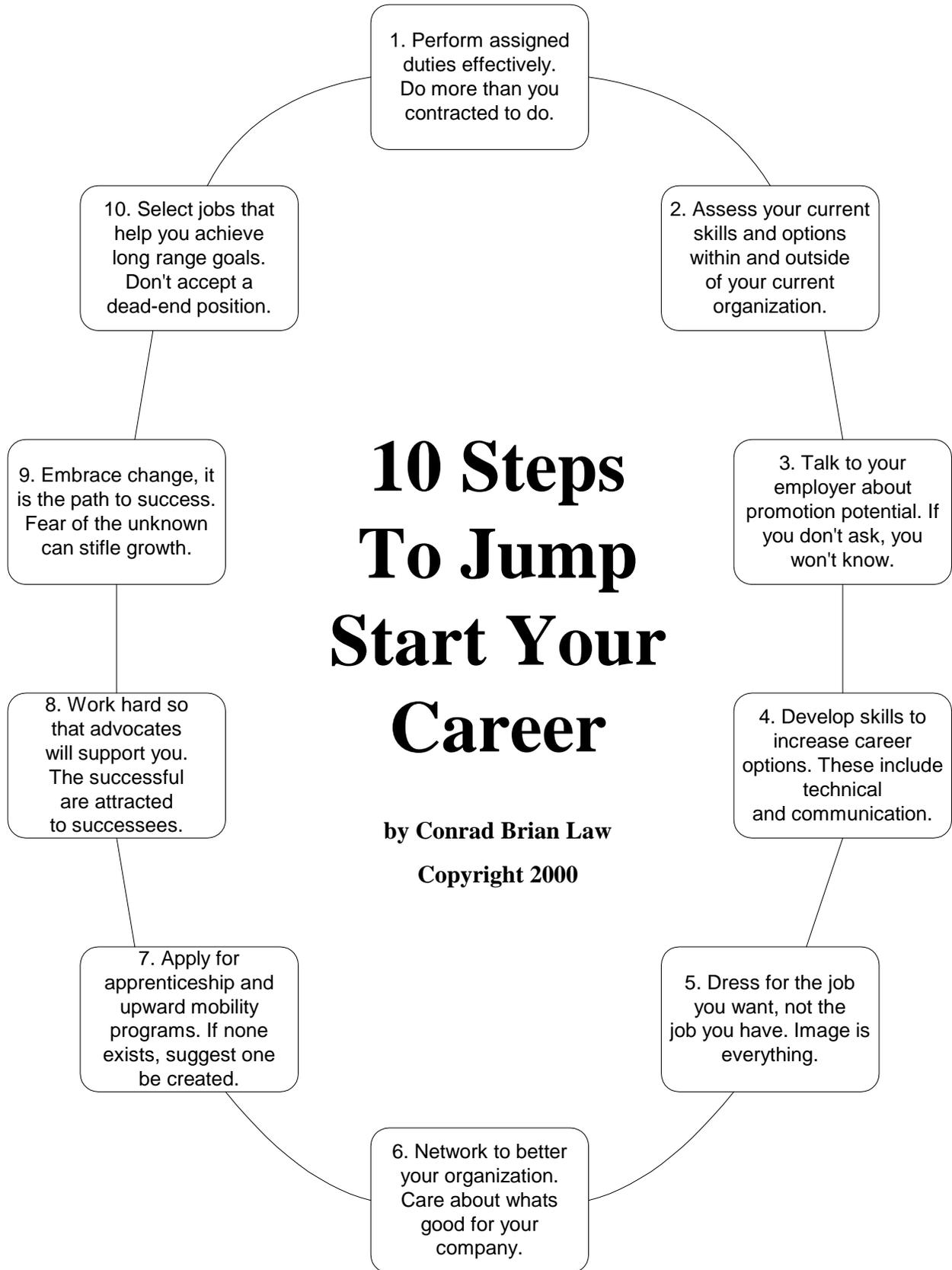
The Ten Steps to Career Success are derived from personal experiences that illustrate universal principles that guarantee success. Though self-esteem is an essential ingredient of successfully executing the model, the activities stand-alone.

At the end of each chapter that represents part of the New Career Advancement Model are checklists called Reality Checks. They are designed to measure attitudes and activities related to work. They attempt to capture your views and behavior with respect to Career Success Strategies. Please complete each section. These self-checks are for your use only, but serve no purpose if the questions are not answered truthfully. Be honest.

10 Steps To Jump Start Your Career

by Conrad Brian Law

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Perform Assigned Duties Effectively

The Role of an Employee

An Employee is a worker hired to perform tasks.

The relationship between an employer and an employee is that the employee follows the rules, guidelines and instructions of the employer. There is typically a contractual agreement between both that entitle each to certain benefits. Written expectations or performance standards dictate what is expected of the employee. Some assignments are verbal directives that should be followed by the employee others involve intangible codes of behavior that are often not discussed.

Your current employment is the result of a contract between you and an employer. The expectations of the relationship are that you will perform certain duties and be paid by the employer. It is expected that you arrive on time, complete assigned tasks, minimize non-work related activities, and take your responsibilities seriously. The fact that no one mentions that a problem exists does not mean that there is one or that no one is aware of it. That existence of a problem with the work relationship does impact what additional benefits you get from the organization. Often paid training and promotion potential are withheld. To the organization and your employer you are a potential liability. You may do valuable work for the organization but only a basic contract exists.

The Benefits of Working

The primary benefit that most of us work for is money. There are other benefits to working as an employee but the organization that you work for also benefits. The relationship between organization and employee can be beneficial to both.

Your organization and employer need you to take care of them, to help them thrive. They want you to do the extra things that need to be done, not because it is your responsibility, but because you saw that it needed to be done and took care of it. You need to take pride in the quality and effectiveness of your work.

One of the benefits available to most of us is paid or reimbursed training. Often our employer will pay for training that will help us do our current job better but sometimes they'll even pay for training that will help us advance our career. Other benefits can include a flexible work schedule, some organizations allow their employees to flex in and out of work with irregular hours and others allow employees to work from home at least part of the time.

Employee Characteristics

Work habits are defined as behavior at the place of work. The behavior may have nothing to do with the work but it does impact the workplace. Some work habits are poor and others are outstanding. Poor work habits don't always get you fired just as outstanding work habits might not get you the promotion you deserve either.

Outstanding work habits are what every manager hopes for, an employee that comes in early, stays late, and does whatever is asked of her or him sometimes without asking. This employee is often disliked by those that feel this individual is trying to make them look bad. They are also taken advantage of by some managers that know this individual will be take on tasks that others are not willing to, with out compensation.

Outstanding work habits

- Arrive at work early
- Leave work late
- Projects completed before due
- Takes responsibility for their work
- Positive customer service attitude
- Follows appropriate business etiquette
- Minimal personal activities at work

Poor work habits are particularly hard to handle because the employer must deal with behavior rather than performance. Problems with attitude and behavior are very personal and hard to change. Many managers find it difficult to deal with these types of problems. Often they don't deal with the problem and hope it goes away or label the employee as an individual not deserving of training or other extra benefits.

Poor work habits

- Arrive at work late
- Leave work early
- Incomplete projects
- Does not take responsibility for their work
- Negative customer service attitude
- Poor business etiquette
- Abuse of phone, lunch, or break privileges

Most employees have a combination of these characteristics that affect their overall work performance. It is normal for employee behavior to fluctuate based on other aspects of an individuals personal life.

If poor work habits affect your job performance, get yourself back on track with these steps.

1. Identify in detail your poor work habits determined by yourself and others
2. Determine why the behavior exists
3. Identify ways to change the behavior
4. Ask for help
5. Take action to change your work habits

Society's Stereotypes

A group of human beings broadly distinguished from other groups by mutual interests, participation in characteristic relationships, shared institutions, and a common culture is called a society. Our society is responsible for the stereotypes that affect us each day. It is the sum of our values and judgements. *“Regional stereotypes have been part of America since its founding. . . . Westerners are trendy, Midwesterners are dull, Northeasterners are brainy, and Southerners are lazy”* (Brad Edmondson).

Many stereotypes exist in the workplace but responsibility for admonishing or dismissing them are confusing at best. There are laws in place that make it illegal for employers to use stereotypes as a guide for handling their employees. But it is the employee that stands to lose.

The burden of dismissing stereotypes lies with the employee. Stereotypes exist for each of these categories: female, male, minorities, the young, and the old, to name a few. I've conducted surveys of students to identify the characteristics of stereotypes and each time there are matches. Stereotypes are the things we look for first. As an employee, it is in your best interest to not demonstrate the negative stereotypical behavior of your group. If you fall into the stereotype trap, you provide those of narrow and closed minds with the ammunition they need to hold you back. In general, when an individual has dealings with people that are different from them, they tend to use stereotypes to pre-judge that individual. Often negative stereotypes are used to judge people. It is the nature of humans to do so.

Attitude Towards Work

A positive attitude towards work is required to be an effective employee. In order to maximize the benefits that you get from your employer you should provide that employer with the best you have to offer. By doing so, you not only have a better chance of getting what you deserve, you can demand it. If you don't get it, you can take your effectiveness to a company that will better appreciate what you have to offer.

Case Study - A Secretary with Potential

Suzy Que is a secretary for company XYZ. She is a single parent with a child that has special needs. As a secretary, she assists the professional staff with projects providing administrative support, phone coverage, copying, and filing.

She believes that she is capable of doing more professional work but doesn't know how to begin advancing her career. She is an effective employee but is unable to get training that will help her advance. Her position required her to be at her desk most of the day. She is unable to attend classes in the evening.

Many individuals faced with this dilemma would either stay in their current position or transfer to an organization that would allow more leave flexibility. She chose an alternative solution.

She proposed going to school during the day to her manager and promised to take any outstanding work home to complete it by the next business day. Because she is a very effective worker with a positive attitude, her employer was willing to let her go to class twice a week during the day after making arrangements for phone coverage. By applying the concepts of career success in this workbook she identified her goal and suggested a solution that met her requirements and the needs of her employer.

Perform Assigned Duties Effectively (Reality-Check)

What are the perceptions of your attitude towards work?

Positive (High) Negative (Low) (Rate your attitude from 1 to 9 with 9 being the highest)

Self

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 How would you rate your attitude (value)?

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 How would you rate your effectiveness?

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 How would you rate your enthusiasm?

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 How would you rate your creativity?

Manager

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 How would your manager rate your attitude (performance)?

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 How would your manager rate your effectiveness?

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 How would your manager rate your creativity?

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 How would your manager rate your enthusiasm?

Co-workers

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 How would your co-workers rate your attitude ?

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 How would your co-workers rate your effectiveness?

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 How would your co-workers rate your creativity?

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 How would your co-workers rate your enthusiasm?

Attitude is in the eye of the beholder. What you think of yourself in these areas is important if you work alone. But, the PERCEPTION that others have of you is more important; especially your manager. There is no scale to this checklist. Evaluate the difference in perception between each group.

Assess Your Skills and Career Options

Review Your Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (K.S.A.)

To determine your best career path we must measure where you fit in your organization, your field, and in the workforce. Does your title match your function? Your job title may be different from your job function but you can use both to your advantage. Determine which provides you with the greatest opportunity for advancement and income potential? It is possible that you can develop additional skills and qualify for even better positions.

Your knowledge, skills, and abilities are those characteristics that identify what you can do. They do not address your potential. Knowledge is the information that you possess, skills are your capabilities, and abilities are the things that you can do. They may or may not be related to your current job.

Through training, developing new skills, and enhancing your abilities you can easily prepare yourself for other positions and careers. Make a list of your knowledge, skills, and abilities; identify others that you need, determine how you will add them, then get to it.

Examine Your Current Position

What opportunities exist in your workgroup, your organization and in your career field? Is advancement a viable option where you work or are there budget constraints, few positions or too many co-workers at your level? Does your position qualify you for entrepreneurial endeavors. By identifying what jobs you can qualify for, and what positions are available, you can explore your options.

You may find that other companies are in greater need than your current organization and willing to pay more. The worst thing to do is to sit around and wait for your turn. Even if you aren't interested in leaving your organization you must be an informed employee.

Choose Your Desired Career

Now that you understand your value, you must make choices to determine your career path. What is it that you want to do? Is it possible to achieve it within your current organization or can you transfer to an organization in current position and work towards your dream job within a new organization? It is easier to advance from the inside of some organizations and for others they prefer to hire individuals from the outside to fill higher level positions. You must understand the career culture of the organization you work for and others that you consider. Many of us don't see the simplicity of making a lateral move to orchestrate a major transition. With an average work life of over 30 years, time is on your side.

Determine How to Attain Your Goals

The true power of knowledge lies in the ability to apply it. Thinking outside the box that surrounds us creates opportunities to succeed. The old rules of career advancement no longer apply. It is up to each individual to determine their value to their organizations and others. Then choose your actions based on your career and life goals. If you desire it, you must determine how to attain it. No one can do this for you.

Assess Your Skills And Career Options

(Reality Check)

Chart your career path

Current Job Title: _____

What qualifies you (KSAs):

What other jobs do you qualify for?

What could you qualify for with additional skills or training?

What is your job goal?

What have you done to get it?

Talk To Your Employer About Opportunities

Talk About Your Aspirations, Goals, Abilities, and Potential.

Tell your supervisor/manager what you want (more responsibility, a future, growth), and ask him or her what you need to do to get it. If promotion potential is not an option, get additional training if possible, additional skills always, and another job, if necessary. If, according to your supervisor, there are no benefits or incentives other than your paycheck, you need to talk to someone else within your organization. Your supervisor may not know what is available to you. Be prepared to ask personnel representatives and other managers. It is your right to attempt to maximize your potential.

Most of us are afraid to talk to a supervisor/manager in this way. You should always know what your options are and what benefits of working exist beyond your paycheck. If you are an effective employee making extra efforts in your job, you are entitled to special considerations. You must not be an average employee.

Having this conversation with your supervisor/manager puts you in a position of influence. If they tell you what you need to do, do it better than anyone else in your organization. When it is time for your appraisal, make sure the previous conversation is discussed and hold your manager accountable to what they stated. If they say you have no opportunities to develop your potential, seek opportunities elsewhere within the organization. Your manager has opened the door for you. It is your responsibility and right to create the career that you desire.

At one point or another you identify what you must do to advance. If you do what is required to advance and it still does not happen, use plan B. You always should have plan B.

What Opportunities Are Available?

If promotion is not an option, consider additional training, a transfer, a reassignment, a detail, an upward mobility program or another job. You won't find out about most of these options from your manager. Personnel or a higher level manager may be the source of the information you need. If you are an effective employee that they do not wish to lose, they will try to accommodate you. When you state your case to other managers and personnel staff, the first question they will ask is, "what did your manager tell you?"

Talk To Your Employer About Opportunities

(Reality Check)

What have you done to advance?

Have you asked your manager what you must do to advance? _____

What was their response? _____

What happened next? _____

How long have you been in your current position? _____ years

Why? _____

Is your current position preparing you for another position?

If you ask your manager this question, there is influence that you receive from them. She/he will tell you what is required or tell you there are no opportunities to advance. Either way you will be able to focus on what you need to do to get a promotion in your office or acknowledge that you need to look elsewhere and concentrate on making yourself marketable elsewhere. You are also empowered to talk to other managers about their opportunities.

Develop Skills To Create Career Options

Develop new skills and enhance existing abilities. If it is difficult to do this on the job, join Toastmasters (speakers group), volunteer, go to school, or get a part time job that will help you evolve. Potential employers are interested in the skills that you possess more than how you obtained them. Networking with others who are achievers helps to determine some of the skills that you need. Skills that are essential include writing and speaking. If reading is not your forte, start with audio books. They come in all flavors. No one can explain your goals, activities, ideas and desires better than you. Make sure you have the skills to promote yourself eloquently.

Training is the Key

Take professional development courses and read books. Effective speaking, Writing techniques, Computer literacy, are skills that will help advance your career. If you can't take evening classes because you need child care after work, ask your employer to let you go to class during the day or work overtime so that you can afford additional child care. Obstacles are in your way to be overcome.

Speaking to a group is the number one fear of most Americans. It is also one of the most important and essential skills necessary to create success.

Never before have there been this many tools to develop yourself. There are magazines, books, audio books, videos, computer based training, online classes, instructor led courses, and the Internet. Learning using these techniques will give you knowledge but in order to benefit, you must turn the knowledge into skills and abilities.

Individual Development Plans

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a tool that identifies the knowledge, skills, and abilities that you would like to develop and how you intend to develop them. In some organizations individual development plans are required. In most of these organizations it is the responsibility of the manager to prepare the document with consultation of the employee. Training that will benefit the organization is identified. Since the employee is the trainee it should be their responsibility to complete the document and they are entitled to identify training that will help them advance. It is the manager's right to pay only for work related training as the budget allows. But, the employee owns the IDP and should identify surpluses in training funds to get the training that they need.

You should have an individual development plan for work and another IDP for your life. Your personal IDP should identify your goals for marriage, investments, retirement and everything that is important in your life.

If your retirement won't pay all of your expenses you should spend your last years at work developing additional skills, investing, paying for training, and determining how you will make ends meet. You can create a new career for yourself or turn your hobby into something you can get paid doing. Most of us wait until after we retire to think about this. Our last few years at work can make us lazy. We can count down the days to retirement the last few years. Then we don't have the funds to get the training or raw materials we need.

Case Study - Ready to Fish

An attendee of my Career Advancement workshop at a government agency approached me afterwards and told me it was pretty good, but it did not apply to him. He was getting ready to retire. I asked him what he wanted to do when he retired in three years. He told me all he wanted to do was fish on the Chesapeake Bay. He planned on sitting on the dock and fishing.

I asked him if he liked going out on the boats? He said, "Yes, but when I retire that will be too expensive." By the time we finished our discussion, his plan of action was to hang out at the docks, volunteer as a mate on a fishing boat, take classes to get his license and work towards getting his own fishing boat by the time he retired. At the very least he will qualify for a job as a mate on a fishing boat which would put him where he wants to be. He had previously not considered this option because he didn't think it was a viable career change. Now he does.

Most of us realize that when we retire, we might need some additional income or there is something else we might want to do. The trick is not to wait until you retire to determine what that goal is.

Develop Skills To Create Career Options

(Reality Check)

What Self-Development activities did you initiate in the past 12 months?

Classes I have taken:

Books I have read:

Skills I have developed:

Do you have an Individual Development Plan (IDP)? _____

Identify two items from your Individual Development Plan that you have accomplished this year.

When was the last time you updated your IDP? _____

Millions spend less than \$10 per year on self-development. Others spend money on things they never use and don't invest the time and effort to fulfill their dreams and accomplish goals.

Dress For The Job You Want, Not The One You Have

There is More to an Image than What you Wear

Dress for success, people will notice you, and you want to be noticed in a positive, professional way. If some one asks you why you dress like a professional when you're only a clerk, let them know. "I aspire to be more than what I am." If you are performing the other activities in this workbook, they will understand your purpose. Another aspect of your professional image is how you manage your workspace. It should be organized and neat.

In the first thirty seconds people make judgments about you based on what they see, hear and sense. It's true that you never get a second chance to create a first impression. Your personal appearance can be your greatest asset or your worst liability.

Image: The opinion or concept of something that is held by the public. The character projected to the public, as by a person or institution, especially as interpreted by the mass media.

Your image says a lot about you, without you saying a word. When someone sees you in public, passes your desk, or looks in your car; they learn something about you.

Develop an image that you are proud to represent.

These are the characteristics of my image. I can be seen reading at lunch or while walking down a hall. I wear vests instead of suits. I volunteer for special events. I speak to everyone, especially babies. I hold doors open for women and children. How we see ourselves is as important as how others see us.

Knowing how to present yourself is as critical as the degrees and business skills on your resume. Companies spend millions of dollars packaging their corporate image. Think of yourself as the most important product you will ever market. Power, Confidence and Credibility are the key components of a winning image. From business casual to the ultimate power look, tailor your presentation for success.

Case Study - Mail Room Mayhem

An attendee at a Career Advancement workshop approached me and asked what she could do. At this workshop she dressed professionally in a skirt and blouse with her hair done. At her job she worked in the mailroom and wore jeans because she got dirty from the work. She told me that everyone at the conference spoke to her and treated her differently than they did at work and she liked it. She wanted to know how she could continue to promote this image.

I asked if the job provided a smock and she said no. I suggested that she purchase a few. She could wear them when she did her dirty work and dress more professionally at other times. She agreed. Attending the workshop improved her self-concept. She found something that she didn't want to lose. By taking this first step she is putting herself in a position for herself and others to look at her differently. Her next step is to move into a position outside of the mailroom. She's well on her way.

Dress For The Job You Want, Not The Job You Have

(Reality Check)

What is your image at work?

Identify apparel that you feel are appropriate for:

Weekdays in the office: _____

Weekends in the office: _____

Working in the Mail room: _____

Working with computers: _____

The Office Picnic: _____

Rule of thumb: If it gets in the way of getting the work done, it must not be appropriate.

What is your image at work?

Do you participate in dress down days? _____

What is your image when you walk the halls? _____

What is your image when you sit at your desk? _____

What is your image in meetings? _____

What is your image at lunch? _____

Network to Improve Your Organization

Be Innovative and Creative

Propose and implement change, a written proposal gives you credit for your idea, a superior may not. Develop that writing ability. Organizations often continue practices that are not beneficial because it is more difficult to implement change than to maintain the status quo. Be prepared to be responsible for implementing that which you propose. Make sure that you are up to the task. Make sure you understand the goals and priorities and make sure that your suggestions are well thought out and practical. Creativity is important. ***Individuals that are innovative are more valuable to an organization than those that simply follow directions.*** To demonstrate your creativity you can identify activities within the organization that are less than effective; research the problem, find someone that solved it in another organization and develop a proposal on how your organization can solve the problem.

Do work above and beyond your responsibility to develop new skills and demonstrate your abilities. This activity shows your dedication to the organization and a willingness to do more than what is expected of you. It will also provide you with additional material for your resume whether your current employer acknowledges that you did the work or not.

Let your willingness to exceed what is required of you be known outside of your office. Make yourself valuable to the entire organization. Even if your current employer doesn't show their appreciation, it will help you get a better job. Your participation in other projects allows others to become familiar with you. This is especially helpful if your current position appears to be a dead end. It gives you an opportunity to network.

Participate in Extra-curricular Work Activities

Participate in the professional activities of your organization. It's not just what you know or who you know, its also ***WHO KNOWS YOU BY WHAT YOU DO.*** Your name should be known throughout your organization for your willingness to contribute time, effort, and most importantly ideas, skills and knowledge that you are willing to share.

Pursue Challenging Assignments. Request challenging assignments from your supervisor. However, be realistic about your abilities and the resources at your disposal for these extra assignments. Big challenges offer larger rewards and greater opportunities for failure. The better that you prepare for a task, it becomes less of a challenge and more of an opportunity to showcase your talents and abilities.

Case Study - Suggestion Box - Double Vision

In an attempt to be recognized by top managers in my organization I submitted two suggestions relating to computer technology standards. The reason I submitted two was to demonstrate that I was interested in information technology components of our organization. I also wanted upper management to know that I was a knowledgeable individual willing to promote what I believed in. I didn't want to submit only one. They might have thought it was a fluke. I did gain the attention of top officials and the suggestions were adopted.

Network To Improve Your Organization

(Reality Check)

What impact have you made on your organization?

Identify a change in your organization that you suggested or initiated:

Identify a change in your organization that you implemented.

If you were given the power to improve your organization, what would you change?

Apply For Apprenticeship And Upward Mobility Programs

What are Employee Development Programs?

Employee development programs are opportunities for the organization to develop individuals that already work for the organization to fill vacancies within.

Why are These Programs Important?

These programs are designed to give deserving individuals an opportunity to advance themselves with management support. If your organization does not have such a program, suggest that they start one. Some programs prepare individuals for entry level professional or technical positions. Others prepare mid-level managers for executive positions. Don't get upset if you don't get accepted into a program when you first apply. Individuals who apply the principles of this model are ideal candidates for these types of programs, but don't place your expectations in this type of endeavor alone.

Who Do You Contact?

The Human Resources department is usually the contact for these types of programs. They are usually responsible for the management and implementation of them. There are also independent industry, government agency, and international programs that you can find if you look for them.

You should apply for these types of programs even if you don't think your chances of getting in are good. Sometimes these programs are used to reward individuals in a particular workgroup. The variety and quantity of positions available is a good indicator of how viable the program is.

The existence of a program does not mean that it works. A unique approach to participating in this type of program is to suggest how it might be improved to better benefit the organization. Then you can volunteer to be one of the revised programs first participants.

If a formal program does not exist you can sometimes create your own by obtaining permission to transfer, be reassigned or conduct a detail in another organization as a career advancement opportunity.

Apply For Apprenticeship And Upward Mobility Programs

How does your organization support advancement?

Organizations have career enhancement programs that employees can apply to:

Aspiring Leader Programs
Mentoring Programs
Apprenticeship

Executive Development
Internship
Details

What programs have you applied for? _____

Were you accepted? _____

Was it helpful? _____

Why/Why not? _____

Have you stopped applying for programs of this type? _____

If yes, why? _____

If these programs do not work, it is the responsibility of those that would benefit from them to suggest how they may be more beneficial or to come up with alternatives that are mutually beneficial to the organization and to the individuals participating in the program.

Work Hard And Advocates Will Support You

What are Mentors and Advocates?

Mentors and Advocates are the individuals in positions of power that help promote your position in your organization. A mentor guides their mentee through the work place answering questions and providing the mentee with recommendations on classes to take, battles to fight, and opportunities to create to advance their career. Career Mentoring is defined as a sustained relationship between a new employee and an experienced employee. Through continued involvement, the experienced employee offers support, guidance, and assistance to the newer person, as he or she faces new challenges, works to correct earlier problems, . The two types of mentoring are natural mentoring and planned mentoring. Natural mentoring occurs through friendship, collegiality, teaching, coaching, and counseling. In contrast, planned mentoring occurs through structured programs in which mentors and participants are selected and matched through formal processes. These programs are important because they help mentored employees develop the necessary skills to enter or continue on a career path

What is the Role of an Advocate?

Advocates are different. They are individuals in your organization that support your activities because they see something in you. They pay attention to your accomplishments and often create new challenges for you. They want to know how you perform under pressure.

Advocates are generally upper management responsible for the organization. When they encounter employees with drive, enthusiasm, and dedication; they respect and appreciate the efforts. You may never know who they are but they exist in every organization. They want to believe in someone and/or something and are kindred spirits to employees striving for success.

You might not know who they are (advocates/mentors), but they will hear about you and support you. Managers in most organizations want their staff to succeed. They also support individuals that develop their own potential. It is something that cannot be taught. A mentor is someone who helps an individual grow within an organization. You can request someone that has made it to where you want to be to mentor you, but advocates work behind the scenes. An advocate supports individuals who grow and expand their abilities. They need to know your work before they can make the decision to support you. You must work on projects that allow you to showcase your abilities.

What is the Role of a Mentee in a Mentoring Relationship?

Mentees are generally junior employees interested in making a career change or advancing. Their mentor is generally an individual that has made it to where the mentee wants to go.

The greatest mistake made by mentees is to do only what the mentor tells them to do or to wait for the mentor to take action on behalf of the mentee. There are generally a shortage of mentors within most organizations for this reason. Mentors should provide their mentees with options that reduce the amount of time and effort they would need to chart their career path. They should not do the work for the mentee. Just point them in the right direction and give them a few tips.

Work Hard And Advocates Will Support You

What type of support network do you have?

Do you have mentors? _____

What do you discuss?

What else is included in your support network? _____

What employee organization activities do you participate in?

What industry organization activities do you participate in?

What self-development organizations do you actively participate with?

Embrace Change, It Is Necessary For Success

What's Change Got To Do With It?

Many people are held back because they are uncomfortable with change. Change exposes you to other opportunities. You should be eager to work, dedicated, and ready to leave if necessary for growth. The days of working for one company after college or high school and retiring from that company are long gone. Change is associated with growth. If change helps you grow, it is beneficial. Many individuals look for advancement in their current office, if they like the work and the environment, they don't look much further. Though they may deserve a raise or promotion the current employer might not offer one. However, if an offer for advancement comes from another source, a counter offer from the current office usually will keep the employee there. If it takes the possibility of losing you to get what you deserve, examine your decision to stay.

Sometimes change is thrust upon us by circumstances beyond our control. This is the devastating type of change. We have no choice in the matter.

How Do Our Fears Control Us?

Most of us spend our lives avoiding those things that make us uncomfortable.

When you reflect upon this model one of the things that you might notice is that a lot of the suggestions are common sense. The benefits of operating under these principles are immediately visible. Why then doesn't everyone do these types of activities in their work?

There is a specific characteristic that any individual must have to attempt most of the steps discussed. That characteristic is a healthy dose of high self-esteem. With it and the right direction, all things are possible. Without it, life is a struggle. Self-esteem is the way you feel about yourself. The better you feel about yourself, the more you are willing to attempt. The thought of failure prevents many individuals from attempting things that draw attention to themselves. If you want to succeed at anything you have to be willing to risk something.

Recommendations

Learn as much as possible about the change that is about to take place.

Determine the impact of change on your career.

Identify multiple options to adapt.

Look at the long term impact of change.

The energy that you waste worrying about how change will affect you should be put to a better use of determining how change, which is inevitable, can benefit you.

Embrace Change, It Is Necessary For Success

How do you respond to change in the workplace?

Do you want to keep your current position and responsibilities? _____

Do you resist learning new skills? _____

Do you resist taking classes? _____

Do you apply for jobs within your current organization? _____

Do you apply for jobs outside your current organization? _____

Do you apply for jobs outside your current job series? _____

When was the last time you submitted a job application? _____

Why? _____

Most of us would rather stay in a job that we don't want, doing work that we don't like, making less than we want to. We want to minimize the anxiety that comes with CHANGE.

Select Jobs To Achieve Your Long Range Goals

Avoid Dead End Promotions

Find a job that will provide you with the skills and responsibilities to get your next job. Avoid dead ends. A promotion may be a worst than a demotion, it's all about opportunities and priorities. If you change from one profession to another you may need to take a reduction in pay or status that will yield greater benefits in the future. Don't take this course of action lightly, but do consider it. Before taking a new position, ask yourself what skills and opportunities will this position provide, will it be a bridge to take you to a higher level?

The job selection process is scary, it requires us to do things that most of us don't want to do. We'd rather stay in a job that we don't like, making less money than we think we're worth. We're afraid if we apply for a new job they might reject us and tell us no. We're also concerned that our current employer will find out that we are looking and fire us; on the other hand, the new job might be worst than our current job.

What are Goals?

Goals are the first step of making a dream become a reality. The purpose of goals is to focus our attention on our future. They give us direction in all areas of our life; career, personal and spiritual.

Why are They Important?

Goals will help you succeed. They put drive and passion into our lives if we let them. Goals help you get where you want to go and find out what you want quicker than just reacting to things that happen in your life.

How Do You Set Goals?

Ask yourself, "What would I do, If I could do anything I wanted?" Then write your ideas on paper. Prioritize them to identify which ones are most important. Identify strategies to accomplish your most important goals. Develop a plan of action. For long term goals break them into smaller pieces.

Each morning ask yourself what you can do to accomplish your most important goals?
Perform tasks each day that help you accomplish your most important goals.
Every night ask yourself what did you do to accomplish your most important goals?
Update your list of goals and carry on tomorrow.

Select Jobs To Achieve Long Range Goals (Reality Check)

How do you evaluate career opportunities?

Any promotion is a good promotion.	True	False
I want a job that won't interfere with my personal life.	True	False
I would rather be home with my family.	True	False
I work because I have to, when I retire I won't do a thing.	True	False
I'm not interested in learning new skills.	True	False
The average person works at least _____ years of their life?		

Typical Job Titles

Clerk	Economic Assistant
Secretary	Computer Technician
Purchasing Agent	Editor
EEO Counselor	Program Analyst
Research Analyst	Accountant
Computer Specialist / Computer Scientist	Accounting Clerk
Computer Scientist	Payroll Clerk
Economist	Management Analyst
Social Science Research Analyst	Budget Analyst

There are professional and non-professional job series, each with a standard career track. They have characteristics that will help you determine which path is open to you. Some of the characteristics have to do with the organization, the location, etc. In order to understand what your options are identify the skills required for each of these career tracks. Some require college degrees, others do not. **Compare and contrast what is required to qualify for each.**

SUMMARY

You are responsible for your success and failure in life. You have been given a gift to determine your destiny. You can choose to use it or ignore it and accept the reality that others create for you.

Technical skills offer the greatest opportunities for advancement. Information technology changes at a fantastic rate and impacts the way all of us work. This trend will continue.

Flexible and alternative work schedules have evolved as employees realize there are more important things to do with their lives. Trends such as independent contracting and working from home are on the rise with savings in benefits and space for companies and more control over their time for the workforce.

Applied Life Long Learning will guarantee that you have the Knowledge, Skills and Abilities you need to succeed. The need to learn and develop new skills, never ends.

Help yourself and others by raising expectations for excellence. Self-esteem is the key to success.

Booker T. Washington once said:

Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life, as by the obstacles which one has overcome while trying to succeed.

And remember: **If you have to work, you might as well get paid!**

“May Your Dreams Become Your Reality”

If you have found this material useful, please send me your comments and stories of your struggles for success. If I include your story in my next edition, I'll send you a free copy of the book. Send your comments to:

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Appendixes

A. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

B. The Entrepreneurial Option

C. Essential Eleven Computer Skills

D. Job Search Web Sites

E. Government Agencies & Web Sites

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A. Essential Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Reading
Speaking
Listening
Writing
Technical
Organizational
Inter-Personal
Leadership
Management

It isn't my purpose to tell you how to develop these skills. There are hundreds of books on these topics and many more. Have you ever thought of listening to audio-books on your way to work?

B. The Entrepreneurial Option

When all is said and done, you may choose to stay in your current position that offers security instead of advancement and flexibility instead of challenging work.

If you have no options to create your dream job where you work, consider developing skills to one day become an entrepreneur. The skills that you develop, the knowledge that you learn, and the abilities that you acquire, may not help you in your current path, but they will ultimately create new paths for you.

Entrepreneurs are risk takers. Successful entrepreneurs take calculated risks. They do their homework.

C. Essential Eleven Computer Skills

There are no universal guidelines for learning how to use computers. These 11 competencies identify what you need to understand about computers in order to master their usage. Many computer professionals either know hardware or software. That's all they need to do their job. If you learn or at least understand all of these areas you will be well on your way to mastering computers.

Most of you don't realize that individuals with little or no knowledge of computers have an advantage over individuals that have worked in the computer field for years. Because the technology changes so rapidly, a novice only needs to learn the new technology but an experienced pro must unlearn many of their skills in order to adopt the new ones.

1. Communications (Keyboarding & Mousing)

To use the computer effectively you must learn to type and to operate the mouse. Nothing is as frustrating as hitting the wrong keys and typing with two fingers. Nothing is as rewarding as being able to communicate with the computer at the speed of thought. Typing tutorial software and a typing class are recommended.

2. Word Processing

One of the most creative of all computer applications, word processing allows you to present yourself professionally. You can create resumes to get jobs, newsletters to share information, and homework assignments that are legible. You can also create opportunities. Microsoft Word is the leading package in this category.

3. Desktop Publishing & Graphics

A picture is worth a thousand words. Increase your ability to communicate by adding artwork, borders, and photos. The main difference between word processing and desktop publishing is control, a desktop publishing application will allow you to control exactly where text and graphics are placed. A full featured package like Microsoft Publisher is an ideal tool. Corel and Microsoft Powerpoint are also included in this category.

4. Operating Systems & Utilities

These applications communicate with the hardware. They start the computer and allow you to copy files, print, and load other applications such as word processing. DOS, Windows 95, Windows 98, Windows NT, Windows 2000, Windows XP and the MAC OS are included in this category.

5. Hardware Upgrades, Repairs, & Maintenance

The easiest computer task is to replace components; it is also the most feared. Armed with basic information and minimal skills, anyone can add a modem, a CD-ROM or a sound card. There are different types of components but they are similar to install. Don't try this on your primary computer, purchase an inexpensive one from an Internet auction site for less than \$100.

6. Financial Applications

Money management and accounting packages allow you to keep track of the money you have coming in and the money going out. They can be as simple as a fill in the blank checkbook or an obscure accounting system with multiple modules. This category includes tax preparation software. Start with Intuit Quicken or Microsoft Money.

7. Database & Spreadsheet Applications

Databases allow you to store and organize similar types of information. Address books, inventories, and Audio CD records are typical databases that would benefit anyone. These systems also let you create your own databases. Once you learn about records, tables and keys, the rest is easy. Microsoft Access is a desktop application that will let you do it all.

8. Network, Intranet & Internet Technologies

Setting up a network between two computers in a room is as simple as inserting a cable between two machines and running software on both to tell them about each other. It can also be more complicated. If you add a modem and a phone line to a computer, you can connect to the Internet for free. Purchasing an inexpensive Pentium computer or two for less than \$100 each is also the best way to get started in this area. Shared resources, e-mail, online databases and collaborative applications are the benefits derived from these technologies. Web, Mail, Database, Print and Application Servers provide the mechanism to distribute information and manage resources.

9. Printers & Peripherals

There are three types of printers and two ways to connect them to a computer. If you know the difference between an InkJet, Laser, and Dot Matrix computer and when they should be used, your halfway there. Once a connection is made, software needs to tell the computer what the printer is and where it is located. Peripherals include external modems, scanners, and tape drives that can be installed in the computer.

10. Integrated & Vertical Market Applications

These applications are combinations of the others created for specific groups or types of organizations. They include church management, beauty salon, rental property, and child care center management software to name a few. The goal of this software is to fit the needs of a particular group while minimizing the need for additional software or skills.

11. Web Programming (HTML, PERL & JAVA)

Everyone should have their own web page. A basic HTML document is nothing more than a formatted document similar to those created by a word processing package. Most packages allow you to get started without knowing how to write code for a programming language.

These essential eleven prepare individuals to master computer usage. Those that successfully develop expertise in these areas will maximize the use of computers in their personal and professional lives. It doesn't matter if you choose a career in computers or not. Everyone needs these skills. With these skills however, you can easily make \$100 or more per hour, part time.

D. Job Search Web Sites

A2Zmoonlighter.com	A2Z MoonLighters
Ants.com	Freelancers
www.ajb.dni.us	America's Job Bank (over 1 million jobs nation wide)
ArtHire.com	Jobs for Artists
CareerExchange.com	Technical Positions
CEWeekly.com	Contract Employment Weekly (Engineering, IT & Technical)
ChristianJobs.com	Christian Jobs Online
CoolJobs.com	Non-Traditional Jobs (Hot-Air Balloon Ground Crew)
Employment911.com	Search over 350 major job web sites
FlipDogJobs.com	FlipDog Jobs
Headhunter.net	Find Your Dream Job
HotJobs.com	Jobs and More Jobs
IWantWork.com	Don't We All?
JobMonkey.com	Seasonal work: ski resorts, casinos, travel
JobsInSports.com	Sports Related Jobs
JobsOnline.com	More Online Jobs
OpportunityNOCs.org	Jobs for Non-Profit Entities
RetailSeek.com	Retail Jobs
SmarterWork.com	Business Services
USJobBoard.com	Completely Free Services

There are hundreds of job search web sites out there. This is just a representative sample. Many offer tips on resume writing and interviewing techniques. The information is mostly free, so take advantage of it.

E. About the Author

Conrad Brian Law is the CEO of URSuccess Unlimited. He presents at National and International Conferences, colleges, government agencies, and schools throughout the country on information technology, self-development and career topics. He has held positions as a Research Economist, Quality Analyst, EEO Counselor, Youth Counselor, Basketball Coach, Computer Specialist, and Management Consultant. Brian also considers himself a technologist and a philosopher and is an MBA candidate at the University of Maryland.

F. About URSuccess Unlimited

URSuccess Unlimited was formed in the fall of 1999. Prior to that time the company was known as Prime Micro Solutions. The change in name and expansion of activities indicated an evolution in the capabilities and priorities of the company. The company changed from a computer service and training organization to a management consulting firm. We cater to the needs of our small business, government and corporate clients. Training is offered at our Fort Washington, MD facility, and can be conducted at your site.

Our services include self and employee development training, technology training, web hosting & design, desktop publishing, and the implementation of business office automation systems. Our specialties include Information Technology and Employee Development Training. Let us customize a training program for you. Please visit our web sites:

www.URSuccess.com

www.FreedomManor.net

www.YourLoanAtLast.com

G. TIME MANAGEMENT

Author Unknown

A while back I was reading about an expert on the subject of time management.

One day this expert was speaking to a group of business students and, to drive home a point, used an illustration I'm sure those students will never forget. After I share it with you, you'll never forget it either.

As this man stood in front of the group of high-powered overachievers he said, "Okay, time for a quiz." Then he pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouthed mason jar and set it on a table in front of him. Then he produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar.

When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "**Is this jar full?**" Everyone in the class said, "Yes." Then he said, "Really?" He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks.

Then he smiled and asked the group once more, "Is the jar full?" By this time the class was onto him. "Probably not," one of them answered. "Good!" he replied. And he reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in and it went into all the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, "Is this jar full?"

"No!" the class shouted. Once again he said, "Good!" Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked up at the class and asked, "What is the point of this illustration?"

One eager beaver raised his hand and said, "The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard, you can always fit some more things into it!"

"No," the speaker replied, "that's not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is: If you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all."

The title of this letter is The "Big Rocks" of Life. What are the big rocks in your life? A project that YOU want to accomplish? Time with your loved ones? Your faith, your education, your finances? A cause? Teaching or mentoring others? Remember to put these BIG ROCKS in first or you'll never get them in at all.

H. Freedom Ain't Free

By C. Brian Law

In 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr presented his “I have a dream” speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. It is one of the most significant presentations in history. Dr. King articulated a dream for an entire nation. His dream was about freedom, freedom that was promised to the Negro back in 1863 when Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation. Freedom that guarantees the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Freedom we ain't got. Freedom that ain't free.

Dr. King made an analogy between the freedom we were promised and a check that we have been unable to cash. Much has changed since 1963, thanks to the civil rights movement. But there is still much that must be done. The check was cashed but we received some of the proceeds in the form of food stamps. Not every one accepts food stamps. Freedom is a right but it comes at great cost. It must be earned, cultivated, nurtured and fought for. And once it is achieved, we must be ever vigilant that it not be lost again.

He had a dream that this nation would rise up and live out the true meaning of it's creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal.” He also dreamed that his children and all people would be judged not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. Those dreams have not been realized and will never be until we understand that Freedom Ain't Free.

Some of you may cringe at my use of the word ain't. Ain't is one of those words we are not supposed to use. It is a sign of ignorance and reserved for use by the uneducated. Ignorance is one of the reasons that we have not achieved true freedom. We are ignorant of the necessity for education, we are ignorant of the value of money, property and entrepreneurship, and most importantly we are ignorant of the fact that we are not yet free. Freedom ain't free whether you are educated or not.

2004 marks the 50th anniversary of Brown – vs - The Board of Education. In this landmark Supreme Court decision segregation on the basis of race was found to be unconstitutional because by separating people of color from their white counterparts society promotes an inferiority machine. Feelings of inferiority have an adverse affect on the motivation and ability of individuals to succeed. These same feelings of inferiority are manifested in housing, in the work place, in the way society treats us, and how we treat each other. We don't value our history, our people or ourselves. This condition is called low race esteem.

A transformation in education is needed to reverse the feelings of inadequacy that exists. In "Mis-Education of the Negro", Carter G. Woodson, the father of African American History said that "If you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his action. When you determine what a man shall think you do not have to concern yourself about what he will do." For hundreds of years, it was illegal to educate Negro's and all aspects of our life were controlled by others. After generations in bondage, many of our forefathers were led to believe that their owners were actually their caretakers and benefactors. Harriet Tubman once said, "I could have freed a thousand more, if only I could convince them that they were slaves. It is up to us to repair this damage.

It has been said, that if you wanted to hide something from a Negro, put it in a book. Now it is, if you want to hide something from an African American, put it on the Internet. There's more to the Internet than Instant Messaging and downloading music. Proper use of the Internet will guarantee that we are never deprived of essential knowledge again.

We need to establish community learning & technology centers to teach our children their heritage, how to set goals, how to create opportunities to succeed, and how to be supportive of all. We need to learn things that they don't teach us in school. We need to learn to manage money and avoid the pitfalls of credit. We must use technology to increase our knowledge and share information globally so that human freedom can be achieved and all can benefit from our experiences.

With freedom comes great responsibility, those who achieve freedom are required to be supportive of the efforts of others to achieve freedom. Freedom is about human right and freedom from the oppression of others. This is the true dream of Dr. King and we must consistently strive to achieve it.

Dr. King had a dream but Malcolm X had a plan.
Freedom Ain't Free II - coming in 2006

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