



Simple Truths and Enduring Values

The Eight Elements of Personal and Organizational Effectiveness

By Robert White

Introduction

500,000 graduates worldwide over a 25 year period. I'm not sure whether my first reaction to that reality is pride at having created companies that have trained that many people, or depression resulting from the reminder of my steadily advancing age. Another realization is that along with whatever contributions we've made to people, we've learned a few things along the way from our participants.

We noticed early-on that some people created more value for themselves than others. People with similar backgrounds in education, success in life and ages reported vastly different value gained from their experience. Given they were in the same room with the same learning design and the same Seminar Leader, what was it that created such widely varying results?

Observation and interviews revealed that how people “showed up” in the seminar made the difference. We began a process of identifying those positive “show up” qualities present in participants who grabbed the gold ring, the ones who created amazing value personally and professionally.

We identified an initial “Five Elements for Success” which eventually grew to “Eight” and became part of every seminar's introductory remarks: “You're here, you've paid your tuition and we assume you want the best possible result. Our experience with thousands of people demonstrates that these 'ways of being', when practiced and lived in the moment, will lead to the best possible experience for you.”

Eight Elements of Personal and Organizational Effectiveness

Decide

Take Risks

Be Honest

Participate 100%

Take Responsibility

Create Partnership

Express Yourself

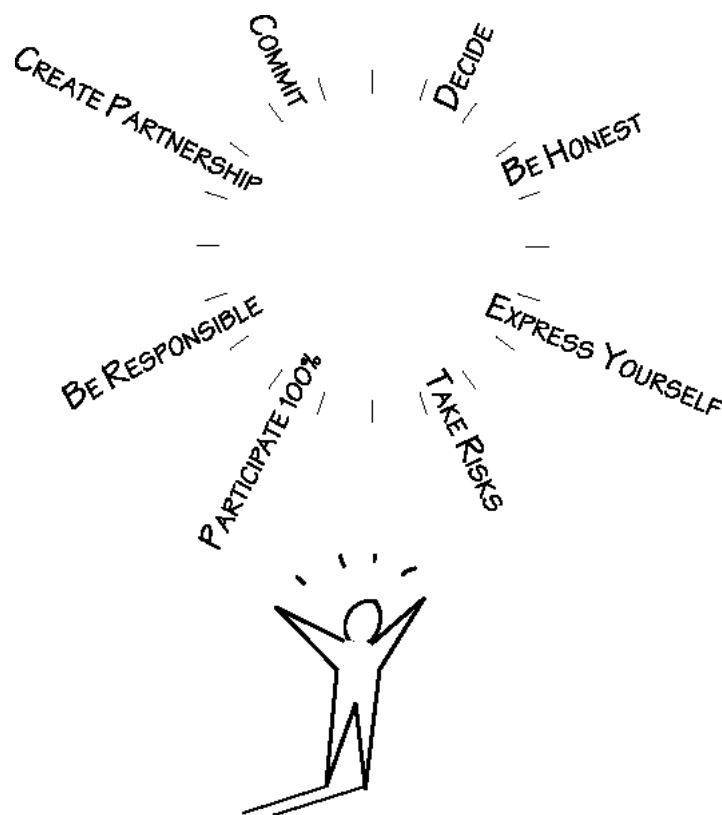
Commit

Introduction *(continued)*

The dialogue that followed often produced amazing insight, especially for already successful people who wondered why they would repeat certain patterns that led them away from what they really wanted to create in their lives, families, friendships, work and communities.

The next breakthrough was noticing that really successful people were practicing these "Eight Elements" not just in our seminar, but in every aspect of their lives. We've since recommended the Elements as a life practice, built various programs around them and they also serve as the core material for my Nightingale Conant home study program, "Living an Extraordinary Life." (Available in CD or audio tape versions by calling 800-659-1659.)

The purpose of this handbook is to share with a wider audience what we've learned about generating a truly successful life. We suggest that you review each of the Eight Elements and then "score" yourself (page 22) on each of the Elements and look at areas where you might want to become more effective. It is, of course, your choice and your opportunity. I appreciate your interest and welcome the chance to be your guide for the journey.



Decide

It is clear that many people live life somewhat reactively, looking only to past experiences to guide them and waiting for current events and circumstances to dictate their choices. I've heard this mode of operating compared to attempting to drive your car by taking a firm grip with both hands on the rear view mirror and attempting to steer the car (or your life) by looking at the past.

Knowing what you don't want is easier for most people and often appears as the only choice available.

We've learned from observing highly successful people and how they've created lives of meaning and abundance that the first element of human effectiveness is simple and highly powerful:

“If we don't know what we want, we become like a floating balloon. Our direction in life is at the mercy of external forces.”

– Bob Greene

DECIDE *Decide clearly, specifically and positively what you want.*

The great experts on this subject have spoken loudly and clearly for centuries. Napoleon Hill, Dale Carnegie, Brian Tracy -- giants in the field of helping us get what we want -- all agree. You must first decide what you want and write it down because only then can you focus your energies on accomplishment.

The more vivid the picture you create in your mind, the more specific you are... the greater the opportunity for success. Do it now. Write it down; Decide clearly, specifically and positively what you want.

Pay attention to those words “clearly, specifically and positively.” You will amplify your ability to actually manifest what you want by using clear, specific positive and outcome oriented language. In our seminars, we call it using the “Outcome Frame:”

What do you want?

When do you want it?

How will you know you are successful?

When you are successful, what else will improve?

Extraordinary Living Action Steps

Here are some suggestions for “homework” that have helped generate positive results for others. Review the sentences below and then “do the work” of completing them for yourself.

In the year 20____....

I want _____
_____ for my physical well being.

I want _____
_____ for my mental/emotional/spiritual growth.

I want _____
_____ for my personal and family financial well being.

I want _____
_____ to further my career success.

I want _____
_____ to contribute to my community.

It seems too simple, doesn't it? Yet those who develop the habit of writing down their goals know the power of this simple exercise.

Remember, decide **clearly**, **specifically** and **positively** what you want.

“ It does not take much strength to do things, but it requires great strength to decide on what to do.”

– Elbert Hubbard

Be Honest

Visualize some dominoes placed on their edges. The one closest is simply telling the truth. When toppled (when you're less than truthful), it hits the next one which is the trust you generate from others. When trust is knocked down it hits relationships which, when diminished, lessens effectiveness.

This fluid, fast moving world we've created (yes I know you might think you didn't create it but, we'll get to that in the responsibility element!) makes trust relationships more important than ever. The ultimate source of creating powerful relationships is authenticity. Can people trust you to tell the truth as you know it and in a way they can receive it?

You must tell yourself the truth first, only then can you be honest with others. I have many "areas for improvement" -- yet I've learned that one of my strengths is an ever-growing ability to develop a "selfless regard for reality." When you were four years old, you might have gained some temporary win by fudging the truth a bit -- with yourself or others. Today, to be effective and create our futures we must learn to simply

BE HONEST *Be honest with yourself and others to create trust relationships*

Of course, it doesn't work to use honesty as a hammer. Feedback is much more powerful when it's honest and yet delivered with compassion. The great motivational speaker Bill Gove taught that when your beloved Aunt Sue shared with you that she had lost weight, you should not say "look back, it's still following you." You say, with loving intent "Aunt Sue, you look marvelous".... because she does.

The goal is to develop trust in your ability and that of others -- your family, your colleagues -- to handle the truth. The effectiveness you create with your family, your work colleagues and your community is greatly enhanced when you express yourself honestly.

The action steps on the next page will give you some work to do that I guarantee will further your goals and serve to deepen the quality and quantity of your relationships.

Extraordinary Living Action Steps

Consider your experience of any relationship where you are less than open and honest. Consider the prices you and the other party are paying as a consequence of your choices.

1. *What could you do to begin a process of “coming clean,” letting that other person know that you've been withholding some communications that are important to both of you, now.... and into your future?*

2. *What are the risks and rewards of continuing to be less than fully honest?*

3. *What are the risks and rewards of choosing to be more open and honest?*

4. *What would be the best environment and the best communications approach to begin creating the kind of trust that builds extraordinary relationships?*

5. *When am I committed to doing it? (**Now** works really well !)*

“ The truth is incontrovertible.
Panic may resent it; ignorance
may deride it; malice may distort
it; but there it is. ”

– Sir Winston Churchill

Take Responsibility

The movie *Forrest Gump* begins and ends with Forrest, a man of limited measurable intelligence **and** unlimited wisdom...wondering aloud about whether our lives turn out the way they do through our choices or is it fate?

Author Simone Weil says that “Liberty, taking the word in its concrete sense, consists in the ability to choose.” Does freedom of choice really exist? Are we really the authors of our own lives? Or is choice an illusion? Maybe we only seem to choose what to do and where to go. Maybe in reality our actions, our feelings, and even our thoughts are controlled by circumstances, one event leading to the next mechanically, like a line of dominos.

“The U.S. Constitution doesn't guarantee happiness, only the pursuit of it. You have to catch up with it yourself.”

– Benjamin Franklin

There are eloquent philosophical arguments for free will, and equally eloquent arguments for determinism, for fate. What might be a lot more useful than philosophy is to ask yourself: if there were two ways of approaching your life, which one will maximize your feelings of personal power, autonomy, freedom, enthusiasm, and self worth?

One is living as though you have the power to choose what happens in your life - taking responsibility for your life. Another is living as though you have no choice, as though you are just a victim, a pawn in somebody else's game. Perhaps it is clear by now that my personal recommendation is to:

TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY *Fully own your results*

How you answer this question will have a powerful impact on your moment-to-moment experience of life-right now. Read on to the Extraordinary Living Action Steps for some ways of being and doing practiced by every super successful person I know.

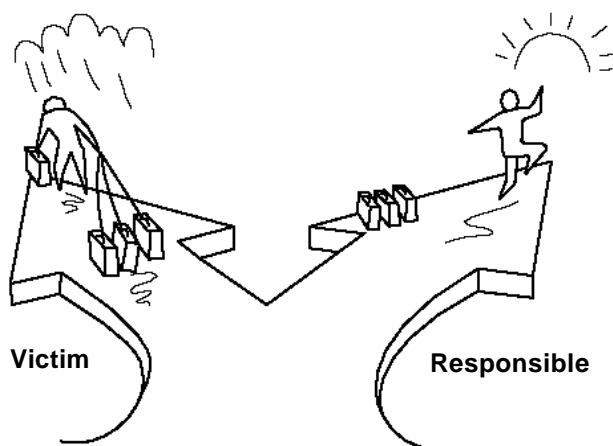


Extraordinary Living Action Steps

Choosing Responsibility

1. If you operate as if you have choice (the responsible position), you automatically increase your sense of empowerment, of control over your own destiny, of integrity and self-esteem. If you operate as if you are a victim of circumstances, or destiny, or fate, or your genetic programming, you automatically increase your sense of weakness, helplessness, powerlessness, and your sense of being out of control.
2. Choice is an essential component of responsibility. Being a victim and assigning blame is the flip side. When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertilizer, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet if we have problems with our friends or family or colleagues, we tend to blame the other person. Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to make yourself right using reason and argument.
3. If you take personal responsibility and choose to understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change. British playwright and practical philosopher George Bernard Shaw said that "People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in the world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want and if they can't find them, make them."

It's a liberating and powerful idea to take full responsibility for your experience of your life.



Express Yourself

Your knowledge, experience and abilities are the contribution and difference only you can make. Recognizing these qualities and expressing yourself through word and deed is a sure-fire way to improve your results in life.

Many people have been taught to be silent and passive, to "put a lid on it". Our lessons as children often included messages that what we thought or felt didn't matter; and often, those early communications have been transformed into self-limiting beliefs that act to limit us as adults in families and workplaces.

Withholding your ideas, objections and point-of-view weakens both your self confidence and the results you want to create with others. It's a vicious cycle: you withhold, which strengthens self limiting beliefs and then your personal and professional results suffer because your ideas weren't heard and tested.....which further reduces self confidence so the next time you'll be even less inclined to speak. The winning personal strategy, assuming you're committed to building self-confidence and living an extraordinary life, is to

“ First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me.”

— Pastor Martin Niemoeller,
(imprisoned by the Nazis in WWII)

EXPRESS YOURSELF *Fully express your unique contribution to your friends, family, colleagues and community.*

Do you depend on others (boss, spouse, trainer) to “draw you out”? That's a losing game. The other person might not see that role as her responsibility or simply feel that she is too busy to play your game.

How many good ideas have you had in your lifetime for improvement or innovation that you didn't express or act on? It's only when people know where you stand by your words and actions that you will attract and engage the others you need to support your vision and create accomplishment.

All accomplishment is rooted in developing your ability to use positive, engaging, powerful and persuasive language and then act on it. Some simple and powerful tips for doing that are listed on the next page in our Action Steps section.

Extraordinary Living Action Steps

1. First, have something to say. I read that simple advice years ago in a Toastmaster's public speaking manual and it's one of the best action steps I can recommend. It requires clarity on your purpose in communicating the vision, you are attempting to enroll others into and the deeper intention of your communication. If your intent is positive, your results will be the same.
2. Choose outcome oriented language. Avoid blame. Those are simple words and very powerful advice. Choose language that focuses yourself and the listener on the positive result you want to create, on what's possible and on solutions for mutual benefit.
3. Put yourself in the best possible mental, emotional and energetic resource state before you launch an important expression of yourself. Here are some questions that will guide your communication "come from:"

- *What do I want?*
- *How will I know when I have it?*
- *When I get what I want, what else in my life will improve?*
- *What resources do I have available to help me with this?*
- *How can I best utilize the resources that I currently have?*
- *What am I going to begin doing now to get what I want?*
- *What am I going to communicate first to get what I want?*

4. Share feelings as well as facts. Let people know you care about your position and about them. Remember that your words are a small part of total communication. Your passion needs to shine through and demonstrate itself in your energy and your body language.
5. Go for it! Holding back is for people who are planning to fail. Your full self expression is wanted and needed by all the people in your life.

Take Risks

Your local library or web search engine can assist with an interesting exercise. Look up “change” ... and prepare yourself for overload. Today a Google search returned over **80 million pages** on change!

Dealing with, managing or at least coping with the ever-increasing rate and amount of change has become urgent issue in our lives and an industry for consultants and pundits.

This report is focused on assisting you, the individual wishing to accomplish more in his or her personal and professional life. The sometimes overwhelming amount of change has a self-defeating side effect: we often become more conservative and risk averse.

The counter-intuitive requirement for living an extraordinary life is that we must learn to successfully deal with change if we are to reach our goals and live lives of purpose, vision and positive values.

“ If you think you can - or you think you can't - you're probably right! ”

– Henry Ford

I'm suggesting here that to live lives filled with meaning and satisfaction within ever changing circumstances includes **learning to take measured and effective risks**.

Taking risks is definitely counter-intuitive. Cave men and women learned really early in our human development saga that risk takers faced the possibility of never making it back to the cave. Thus was born the famous flight or fight choice and neither one looked very attractive then or today.

Our seminars often include experiences that demonstrate to participants that we settle into “comfort zones,” ways of being and doing that are marked by familiarity and past success. Perhaps a bit boring..... but safe. It's also easy to demonstrate that it is only through risking that new possibilities emerge for us both personally and professionally.

TAKE RISKS *Break through any limitations.*

Take Risks *(continued)*

Acting within your limitations, those “comfort zones,” is not risking and will produce predictably mediocre results. The “stopper” is fear and if you want to be in charge of your own life and what you create, then fear must be faced and you must act through it. It takes courage and commitment, nothing more and nothing less.

If you don't feel fear and don't need courage, it's probably not a risk. You're probably still in your comfort zone.

Your childhood and perhaps your early career and relationship decisions included significant risks. It might be time to “step up” once again. As Karl Wallenda of the famous Flying Wallendas said

*“ Being on the tightrope is living;
everything else is waiting.”*

– Karl Wallenda

In summary, you won't be moved to take risks - the discomfort will stop you - unless you're clear that your current behavior is not moving you closer to your goals, your dreams for a future that includes living an extraordinary life. With that in mind, take a pencil in hand and complete the questions on the next page.



Extraordinary Living Action Steps

The less than optimal results I'm settling for in my life are...

The fears that might be in my way of acting to get what I really want are...

The personal prices I'm paying by not taking the risk called for to get what I really want are...

The "payoffs" for me when I choose to act on what I really want, take the risk and go for what I really want are...

It's only when we're clear about the prices we're paying by not risking and the "payoffs" of taking a risk, that we'll consistently summon the courage to act, to risk, to put it all on the line.

So... following my maxim that we all know what's best for us...

The risks that I know I need to take next are...

Participate 100%

My former wife and I moved in 1971 from relatively conservative Wisconsin to "crazy California." We learned about Buddhist teacher Ram Dass' teaching to "be here now". We weren't sure what it meant but it seemed a good idea!

When we teach participation as a key to successful living, we mean more than having your consciousness present. Our approach is an extension of "be here now" that includes personal action - total involvement. When your level of engagement with projects and people goes up, the level of productivity soars and whatever you're doing becomes incredibly enjoyable.

Behaviors like sitting back, judging and analyzing have their own place at the right time. They can also result in a lack of creativity, reduced energy (for you and those with you) and "no fun." Think back to when you were totally involved in something important to you-participating 100%. What happened? Probably others listened and spoke from their passions, problems were solved and decisions got made. Just one person choosing to participate 100% can make an incredible difference and you can be that person. Just think of what happens when one person chooses to

PARTICIPATE 100% *Become a full participant in your own life.*

It can make an incredible difference and you can be that person.

We live in a culture increasingly drawn to spectator sports and other passive activities. When we slip into them as a metaphor for the way we show up in life, there's a strong tendency to become spectators when the need is for 100% participation. There's a world of difference between watching things happen and making things happen.

I love the energy and idea expressed in the African fable:

Every morning, a gazelle wakes up and knows that it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up and knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve. It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle: When the sun comes up, you'd better be running!

There's only one you, only one person with your unique set of skills, awareness and passions. Bring that person into your every interaction and you'll see, sense and feel the positive difference in your accomplishments.

Extraordinary Living Action Steps

1. There's only one you, only one person with your unique set of skills, awareness and passions. Bring that person into your every interaction and you'll see, sense and feel the positive difference in your accomplishments.
2. Identify the people and circumstances where you naturally participate 100%. Get a clear sense, a feeling for that experience, and have it be your model for all of your interactions.
3. Also identify the people and circumstances that trigger you not being at 100%. Resolve to "act as if" you were participating 100%. Resolve also to clear up any issues with that person or circumstance that get in the way of your being at 100%.
4. Make a commitment to yourself: you and the others in your life deserve and want you to be fully present, to participate 100%. Just do it!

“ I believe that every right implies a responsibility; every opportunity, an obligation; every possession, a duty. ”

– John D. Rockefeller



Create Partnership

A few years ago, at the Seattle Special Olympics, nine contestants, all physically or mentally disabled, assembled at the starting line for the 100-yard dash.

At the gun, they all started out, not exactly in a dash, but with a relish to run the race to the finish and win. All, that is, except one little boy who stumbled on the asphalt, tumbled over a couple of times, and began to cry.

*The other eight heard the boy cry. They slowed down and looked back. Then they all turned around and went back. **Every one of them.***

One girl with Down's Syndrome bent down and kissed him and said: "This will make it better." Then all nine linked arms and walked together to the finish line. Everyone in the stadium stood, and the cheering went on for several minutes. People who were there are still telling the story.

Why? Because deep down we know this one thing: What matters in this life is more than winning for ourselves. What matters in this life is helping others win, even if it means slowing down and changing our course....

CREATE PARTNERSHIP *Choose to play a win-win game with everyone in your life.*

My twelve years resident in Japan taught me many things. Perhaps the biggest learning and the one I share when people ask me about that experience, is the Japanese culture's commitment to everyone in a group winning, to working together for mutual benefit. The Japanese proverb says:

“A single arrow is easily broken, but not three in a bundle.”

– Japanese Proverb

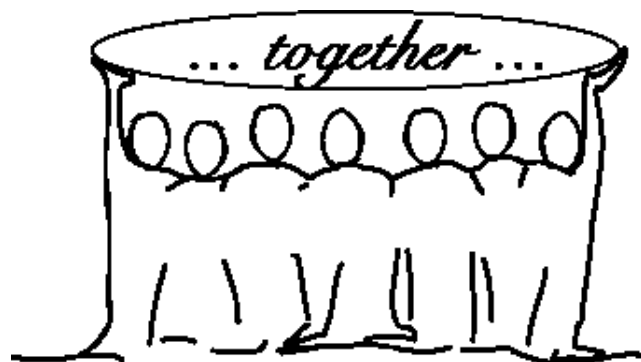
Our Western society often seems a win/lose, competitive frenzy. It often damages relationships and prevents us from partnership. Beginning to live from a commitment to mutual benefit in your relationships will change your experience of life for the better.

Create Partnership *(continued)*

Here's how it might work in something as simple as this handbook. While I'm totally unwilling to take responsibility for the value you'll create from choosing to read this, I am totally responsible for creating context and content that will support and even accelerate your journey toward living an extraordinary life.

How about you? Are you willing to be in partnership with me? Are you willing to simply look at these ideas and temporarily suspend judgment about whether they are right or wrong? Are you willing to test them against your own knowledge and experience and thus determine if they can work in your life? Or are you practicing an inner dialogue of judgment that prevents real learning? Partnership attitudes require the suspension of quick conclusions, prejudices and judgments.

Our partnership with you includes asking you to take the time to honestly answer the following questions in the Extraordinary Living Action Steps.



Extraordinary Living Action Steps

A few minutes completing the following questionnaire can be a powerful experience. Consider the following questions:

I consistently play "win-win" with the following people or in the following circumstances _____

I need to play "win-win" more consistently with the following people or in the following circumstances _____

When I truly operate in partnership, my relationships and results have the following qualities _____

When I play the win-lose game, my relationships and results have the following qualities _____

The people or circumstances that seem to support my playing win-win are _____

The people or circumstances that seem to generate the space for my playing win-lose are _____

The person or circumstance where I most need to play "win-win," to set a context of partnership for mutual benefit is _____

I'm committed to actually doing that by _____ and the result I will create by being in partnership is _____

Commitment

John F. Kennedy was quoted as saying "There are risks and costs to action. But they are far less than the long range risks of comfortable inaction."

It is only by being "in action" that we can create the results we want in life, including the creation of an extraordinary life experience and results.

What keeps you from taking action? Generally it's because you try to be reasonable. You think it through. You stick your toe in the water. You check out how others react. All very reasonable steps to take and I'm certainly not advocating that you do dangerous things. It's just that by being reasonable you run the risk of being distracted by events that have more enjoyment or short-term importance and you get off the track toward what you really want to create.

COMMIT *Do what it takes to be your word and keep your promises.*

When you are committed you deal with what's most important to you in your life. For example, imagine knocking on a house door and getting no response, though you feel sure someone is home. You wait a reasonable amount of time, then leave.

Now imagine there is a raging fire being wind driven across the yard towards the house. Your urgency, your compassion and demand for a result is engaged. You bang on the door while shouting, "Fire! Get out!" Your level of commitment brings action that brings the occupants quickly to the door and their lives are saved.

But what if there is no emergency in your life? What if no external force shouts you into action consistent with your priorities? Then where does your commitment come from?

Creating an extraordinary life requires a 100% commitment. Not 99%. In practice, 99% is the same as zero. Find a purpose, vision and the actions that deserve a 100% commitment and your entire experience of life will change. Helen Keller said: "Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all." And her life is clearly a model of an extraordinary life we could learn from. So...*What are you committed to?* In our Action Steps on the next page we ask some very pointed questions to help you decide.



Extraordinary Living Action Steps

What are you committed to? Some important and possibly useful questions here are:

"What life purpose or vision is so important to me that it engages me at physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels?"

What would cause me to tingle with excitement and anticipation?

What idea would not let go of me until I figured it out?

What would automatically bring forth overwhelmingly positive feelings?

What would mean so much to me that it would resonate within at a very deep level?

Eight Elements Self-Evaluation *(continued)*

First, take a look at those qualities where you scored yourself fairly high. This will be the most challenging part of the exercise because your assignment is to take responsibility for living consistently with qualities of being that are practiced by winners. Acknowledge yourself for this and be willing to consider that whatever your accomplishments, personally and professionally, they are probably directly linked with your scores in these areas.

Said most simply **Celebrate your greatness.**

Now look at those qualities where there is room for improvement and select one or two at the most. Go back and read those sections of this handbook and develop your own plan of action, your personal "next steps." Just some very small adjustments to your day-to-day behavior can result in some very big improvements in both the quality of your life and in the quantity of your results.

Again, said simply ... **Give yourself permission to get better.**

Wishing you an Extraordinary Life and Extraordinary Organizations ...

Robert White

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