



KAREN B. FORD

THE POWER OF PERSONAL CHANGE

Prepared By: Karen B. Ford

THE BEST REFORMERS THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN ARE THOSE WHO BEGAN WITH THEMSELVES.

“We must be the change we envision.” -- Mahatma Gandhi—

“Everyone thinks of changing the world but no one thinks of changing himself.”
— Leo Tolstoy—

Comments About Personal Change

1. One person cannot change another person.
2. Most people need to look at the way they look and think about change.
3. When you make the right PERSONAL CHANGES, other things begin to turn out right.

“If you really wanted to be any different, you would be in the process of changing right now.”
—Fred Smith—

“We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.”
--Max Dupree—

A person (Director) needs to focus on three areas **personally** on a daily basis. When this focus is in tact, the transition process leads to personal growth and effective skills in working with people. The complexity to our business begins with people.

1. **PERSONAL ATTITUDE**- This area is critical. More than anything else, attitude determines success. Personal attitude impacts not only every area of our own lives, but also influences others. Attitude is affected by others actions, and our response or reaction to those actions. The focus on personal attitude is essential to successful growth. The ability to “lead by example” is impaired if the focus on personal attitude is not clear.
2. **PERSONAL DISCIPLINE** – The ability to develop self-discipline as a leader is essential to success. This area is perhaps the one where *change* is most challenging. Personal discipline is developed not learned. Personal integrity is linked to the ability to develop self-discipline. When *feelings* begin to determine *behavior* the ability to grow in the area of self-discipline is in jeopardy. When the *behavior* determines the *feelings* the process of growth in this area is powerful.
3. **RELATIONSHIPS** – *Leadership is influence*, nothing more, nothing less. The ability to lead a team, a unit, a future area, or an area, is based on *strong healthy relationships*, with a *foundation of trust* and an environment of *mutual respect*. Typically a new leader will begin with a fragile relationship (at best) with those on her team. A daily focus on healthy relationships is critical to *sustained success* as a leader. A leader who is growing personally, *servicing* others by focusing on what is best for the other persons involved, and keeping personal feelings and attitude in check, will begin to develop strong relationships with those she leads.

“Life consists of what a man is thinking about all day.” --Ralph Waldo Emerson—

“Nothing limits achievement like small thinking ;nothing expands possibilities like unleashed thinking.” --William Arthur Ward—

Success is a continual thing. It is growth and development. It is achieving one thing and using that as a stepping stone to achieve something else. –John C. Maxwell—

IT'S EASIER

It's easier to settle for average
Than strive for achievement.

It's easier to be saturated with complacency
Than stirred with compassion.

It's easier to be skeptical
Than successful.

It's easier to question and analyze
Than conquer.

It's easier to rationalize your disappointments
Than realize your dreams.

*People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered—**love them anyway.***

*If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives—**do good anyway.***

*If you are successful, you'll win false friends and true enemies—**succeed anyway.***

*The good you do today will perhaps be forgotten tomorrow—**do good anyway.***

*Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable—**be honest and frank anyway.***

*The biggest person with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest person with the smallest mind—**think big anyway.***

*What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight—**build anyway.***

*People really need help but may attack you if you help them—**help them anyway.***

Give the world the best that you have and you will get kicked in the teeth—give the world the best that you have anyway.

If better is possible, then good is not enough.

ATTITUDE, AND THE CONFLICT OF CHANGE

We resist nothing more than change. Many times we enjoy the rewards of change but endure its process. We are creatures of habit. We first form the habits, then our habits form us. We are what we repeatedly do. It is easy to see our world only from our perspective. Listen to the following statements. One is true, the other is not.

“Change brings Growth”

“Growth brings Change”

The first statement, “Change brings Growth,” is true only if your attitude is right. With the proper attitude, all change, whether positive or negative, will be a learning experience which results in a growing experience. Our ability to control changing situations, or choices that others make, has caused many attitudes to crash. Yet this does not have to happen, if there is a focus daily in the area of personal attitude.

We are either the masters or the victims of our own attitudes. It is a matter of personal choice, daily. Who we are today is the result of choices made yesterday. Tomorrow we will become what we choose today. To change an attitude, and to control an attitude, means to constantly focus on personal attitude. Many times an attitude is like the undergarment, the slip, “it is showing.”

Once you make the choice to possess a good attitude the work really begins. Now comes a life of continual focus on personal attitude, which leads to growth and maintaining the right perspective. Attitudes have a tendency to revert back to their original patterns if not carefully guarded and cultivated.

HOW TO FOCUS ON PERSONAL ATTITUDE—THE CHOICE WITHIN YOU

CHOICE # 1. Evaluate your present attitudes. This will take some time. If possible, try to separate yourself from your attitudes. The goal of this exercise is not to see the “bad you” but a bad attitude that keeps you from being a more fulfilled person, and a more effective leader. The evaluation helps you make key changes only when you identify the problem. Results are the only real reason for activity. The following evaluation process is developed to help you search for the right answers in the most efficient way.

- A. **Identify problem feelings**—What attitudes make you feel the most negative about *yourself*? About your *business*? Usually feelings can be sensed before the problem is clarified. *Write them down.*
- B. **Identify problem behavior**—What attitudes cause you the most problems when dealing with others? *Write them down.*
- C. **Identify problem thinking**—We are the sum of our thoughts. What thoughts consistently control your mind? Although this is a beginning step in correcting attitude problems, these are not as easy to identify as the first two. It is not just a matter of “*changing your mind*” it is a matter of changing your “**THINKING.**”
- D. **Secure Commitment**—“*What must I do to change?*” now becomes “***I must change.***” Remember the choice to change is the one decision that must be made, and only you can make it.

CHOICE # 2-Think...is your faith stronger than your fear. The only thing that will guarantee the success of an undertaking is the faith from the beginning that you can do it. Where there is no faith in the future, there is no power in the present. An attitude of gratitude and recognizing blessings on a daily basis will feed the faith and reduce fear. Each day is a faith walk, take one step at a time.

CHOICE # 3. Begin to identify purpose. Most emerging leaders sense a purpose and a calling to lead. However writing a statement of purpose can be challenging in the beginning. Begin to recognize that purpose is linked to the reason for the decision to take the step into leadership. Typically you will find that “*what makes you happy*” when you work, will be linked to purpose. A clearly defined goal, written down, with a date attached for a time frame, is the first step to take to identify your purpose.

CHOICE # 4. Determine if you have the desire to change. No choice will determine the success of your attitude change more than desiring to change. When all else fails, desire alone can keep you heading in the right direction. Many people have climbed over insurmountable obstacles to make themselves better people when they realized that change is possible if they really want it bad enough.

CHOICE # 5. Live one day at a time. Anyone can battle for just one day. It is only when we dwell on yesterday, and worry about tomorrow, that we become confused and lose clarity. Yesterday’s mistakes, can lead to tomorrow’s victories, if our attitude is right. Live but one day at a time—**today!**

CHOICE # 6. Change your thought patterns. That which holds our attention determines our actions. We are where we are and what we are because of the dominating thoughts that occupy our minds. Our feelings come from our thoughts. Therefore, we can change them by changing our thought patterns. Our thoughts live, not our circumstances determines our happiness.

CHOICE #7. Develop good habits. Attitudes are nothing more than habits of thought. The process for developing habits, good or bad, is the same. It is as easy to form a habit of succeeding as it is to succumb to the habit of failure. Habits aren't instincts; they are acquired actions or reactions. They don't just happen; they are caused. When habits are hurtful they damage our attitudes.

CHOICE #8. Continually choose the right attitude. There is no improvement except through change. Our decision to continually choose the right attitude will bring many benefits. You are the key to changing and maintaining a good attitude. To improve continually we must change continually. No one but you can determine what you will think and how you will act. Take control and begin an exciting journey of discovery as you focus daily on ATTITUDE.

Once you have made the choice to focus on attitude improvement you are prepared to work in the other two areas of daily focus, personal discipline and relationships.

Suggested Action:

If you are not currently working with a PERSONAL GROWTH program. Begin TODAY on your journey of PERSONAL GROWTH. As you continue the “process of becoming who you will be” through personal growth, the changes necessary will become routine!

KAREN B. FORD

PERSONAL DISCIPLINE—AND THE CONFLICT OF CHANGE

Because few people control their thinking, they fail to control their lives. When the feeling of being “**out of control**” is present on a daily basis the tendency is to look for *shortcuts*. Reality is, that the longest distance between you and the success you desire is a shortcut. Determining to focus on daily disciplined activity will *reduce stress, increase confidence, and instill power* in your *performance*.

Leadership and convenience are not always possible. What is convenient is not always what is effective. Doing the right things for the right reasons leads to a life of personal discipline. Doing the right things for the wrong reasons often leads to disappointment and frustration.

Every worthwhile accomplishment has a price tag attached to it. The question is always whether you are willing to pay the price to attain it—in hard work, sacrifice, patience, faith and endurance. —John C. Maxwell—

People who achieve daily success have learned to conquer four common time wasters.

1. **Laziness:** Time put to no useful purpose, not even relaxation.
2. **Procrastination:** Putting off things that should be done now.
3. **Distraction:** Time frittered away on the details of side issues, to the detriment of the main issue.
4. **Impatience:** Lack of preparation, thoroughness, or perseverance, usually resulting in time consuming mistakes.

Successful leaders are not always organized, rather they have learned to prioritize and take action. Determining the difference between the “necessary and important” activities, and the “productive” activities is essential to define your day.

As you discover your purpose and pursue your dreams, you will inevitably spend more and more of your time doing what you enjoy and do best. That’s

good. You can achieve your dreams only if you focus on your priorities. But success does require discipline. One of the best ways to improve discipline is to do something you don't enjoy doing—everyday! If you learn to do what you must, you will be able to do what you want.

On a daily basis look for opportunities that will allow you to develop personal discipline.

1. **Initiate accountability**—In order to truly learn to be accountable to yourself, you must first learn to be accountable to someone else. Those who truly desire accountability for growth are responsible for initiating the accountability they desire from their leader or mentor.
2. **Associate with the right people**—Many times people blame circumstances for their problems. But usually it is the people that we associate with, not the circumstances we encounter, that makes the difference in our lives. Good circumstances with negative people results in a confirmation of mediocre thinking. Poor circumstances with positive result oriented people around us results in positive progress.
3. **Select a model to follow**—Select someone to follow who gives you a constant visualization of what you want to become. Making a single decision to alter an attitude is not enough. The vision you desire must be constantly before you. To achieve the personal discipline level you desire, you must act, walk, talk and conduct yourself as the ideal person that you visualize yourself to be. Gradually old habits will pass away and be replaced with new ones. Begin looking for someone who will stretch you.
4. **Learn from your mistakes**—The only people not making mistakes are those that aren't doing anything. Learning from the mistakes that we make is a part of developing personal discipline. You cannot control all circumstances. You cannot always make right decisions that will bring right results. But you can always learn from your mistakes and the mistakes that others have made. Discipline your thinking in this area and give your “better” self a chance to grow.
5. **Expose yourself to successful experiences**—Those that show up go up. The connection to other successful people and observing their “success” habits allows us to grow and develop personal discipline. Observing action that produces confidence and a degree of success will encourage us to attempt new challenges. People change more quickly if they are continually exposed to situations in which they observe success.

“How can you know what is in your heart? Look at your behavior. There is no better sign of the heart than the life.” --LeRoy Eims—

“The first and best victory is to conquer self. —Plato Philosopher—

Anyone who does what she must only when she is in the mood or when it’s convenient isn’t going to be successful. Nor will people respect and follow her. Someone once said, ***“To do important tasks, two things are necessary: a plan and not quite enough time.”*** As a leader, you already have too little time. Now all you need is a plan. If you can determine what’s really a priority and release yourself from everything else, it’s a lot easier to follow through on what’s truly important. ***And that’s the essence of self-discipline.***

Self-discipline can’t be a one-time event it must become a lifestyle. One of the best ways to begin, is to develop systems and routines, especially in areas crucial to your long-term growth and success. This is not something you just do for a season, do it everyday for the rest of your life.

To develop a lifestyle of discipline, one of your first tasks must be to *challenge* and *eliminate any tendency to make excuses*. If you think you have several reasons why you can’t be disciplined, realize that they are really just a bunch of excuses—all of which need to be challenged if you want to go to the next level as a leader.

When you focus on the difficulty of the work instead of the results or rewards that the work will bring, you are likely to become discouraged and feel disorganized. Dwell on it too long and you will develop self-pity instead of self-discipline. The next time you are facing a must-do task and you are thinking of doing what’s convenient instead of paying the price, *change your focus*. Count on the benefits of doing what’s right, and dive in to the task at hand.

HOW TO MAKE CHANGES...

“Ability without discipline is like an octopus on roller skates. There’s plenty of movement, but you never know if it’s going forward, backwards, or sideways.”
--Jackson Brown, Jr.—

If you know you have ability, and you are in motion with appropriate activity and are seeing few concrete results—you may need to develop personal discipline.

Look at your typical day and ask yourself...

1. How much of your time did you devote to ***regular, disciplined activities***?
2. Did you do anything to ***grow*** and improve yourself ***professionally***?

3. Did you engage in *activities promoting good health*?
4. Did you dedicate your financial resources *properly*?

If you've been putting off these things or others that should be priorities, telling yourself you will do them later, you need to work on your personal discipline. To improve, do the following:

1. **Determine your priorities.** Think about which two or three areas are most important to you. Write them down, along with the disciplines that you must develop to keep growing and improving in those areas. Develop a plan to make the disciplines a daily part of your life.
2. **List the reasons.** Take the time to write out the benefits of practicing the disciplines you've just listed. Then post the benefits someplace where you will see them daily. On the days when you don't want to follow through, reread your list of benefits!
3. **Get rid of excuses.** "*Excuses are lies you tell yourself that nobody believes but you*". Write down every reason why you might not be able to follow through with your disciplines. Read through them. You then need to dismiss them as the excuses they are. Even if a reason seems legitimate, find a solution to overcome it. Don't leave yourself any reason to quit. Remember, only in the moment of discipline do you have the power to achieve your dreams.

A nursery in Canada displays this sign on it's wall: "*The best time to plant a tree is twenty-five years ago...The second best time is today.*"

PLANT THE TREE OF SELF-DISCIPLINE IN YOUR LIFE TODAY!