

# HOW TO TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR FUTURE

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How Not To Worry About What You Can't Control  
And Find The Direction You Desire

*There is widespread belief today that no matter how smart we are and how hard we work,  
our success and happiness are no longer certain....*

**Reality:** We have more control over our future than we think---if we change the way we think about ourselves and allow our inspirations to guide our aspirations.

## THE POWER TO CHANGE

One of the most powerful and efficient ways to reevaluate who we are and alter our direction in life is through *psycho-cybernetics*.

Psycho-cybernetics is a form of self-therapy that concentrates on the role that self-image plays in nearly everything we do. Only by taking control of our self-image and changing the ways in which we act and respond can we achieve our goals.

Psycho-cybernetics was developed by Maxwell Maltz, MD, a plastic surgeon. Dr. Maltz noticed that after corrective surgery, some of his patients still behaved as if they were deformed. He concluded that self-image was often more important to a patients success in life than the surgery.

Dr. Maltz went on to draw a more general conclusion in his 1960 best seller, *Psycho-cybernetics* (Pocket Books/\$6.99). If people could change their self images voluntarily, he argued, they would be able to lead fuller, more satisfying lives. Psycho-cybernetics succeeds because it shows us specific ways to use our conscious minds to change the negative images in our subconscious minds that hamper success.

## MISSION CONTROL

While much of what affects your everyday life may be outside of your control, you can take charge of situations that present themselves by setting goals that are strong and flexible.

Think of your brain as an inner guidance system, like the computers that direct missiles. Your brain decides the direction in which you travel - what choices you make in work and life. It determines how you react to setbacks and difficulties. Learn how your *brain* will locate and pinpoint anything that is on your *mind*.

It is important to choose wisely and control the information you feed your inner guidance system, if you want it to direct you toward success.

### SEEDS OF SUCCESS

The secret of dealing effectively with whatever challenges come your way is a process that I call  
**SEED**

**S** stands for the **situation** that arises. It's a fact, a reality that nothing can undo.

**E** is the way you **evaluate** the situation, with self-talk that interprets and judges what is happening. Do you hear yourself blaming others (How can they do this to me? It isn't fair)... or blaming yourself (This just shows I'm a failure)? Such messages bring nothing but self-induced misery.

**E** is the **emotion** that arises as a result of the evaluation. If you react to a setback by blaming others and anticipating disaster, your emotions will be anger, frustration and fear. You'll be unable to function effectively, and the stress may make you physically ill. But if your evaluation bypasses "not fair" thinking - and focuses instead on positive strategies for which you can take responsibility - you'll be calm and in control. The key is to catch yourself as soon as "not fair" thinking begins, and to consciously change your view from external to internal. Only by holding yourself accountable can you limit your emotional reactions.

**D** is for what needs to be **done**. Where will you go from here? A calm, positive outlook orients your behavior toward a proactive, problem-solving stance.

**S** signifies that acting in this way will bolster your **self-esteem**. Rising to the crisis with a calm, effective game plan will increase your feeling of confidence - a vital ingredient for success.

### SETTING FLEXIBLE GOALS

You can't use your inner self-guidance system effectively unless you have a target - a clear-cut goal to strive for. You must define the direction of your life before you can move in that direction.

A goal should be specific - not I want a better job, but a specific job that you've decided is right for your needs, skills and long-range ambitions.

- **Write down your goal.** This makes your conscious mind fully aware of the goal and

reinforces your commitment to that goal.

If you don't take the trouble to write down your aspirations, how will you take the trouble to follow through?

- **Develop an action plan to achieve your goal.** Break the big picture down into small, concrete actions you must take to get where you want to go, and assign dates for achieving them. Identify obstacles, and create strategies to overcome them. Surround yourself with people who want you to succeed, not discouragers and naysayers.

**Example:** Ten years ago, I was a successful psychotherapist in private practice. But back then, I decided there was something I wanted even more - to be someone who lectured around the world. I had been speaking in front of audiences with some success and wanted to do the same thing abroad. So I wrote down my goal and pasted it in places I would see it every morning - on the bathroom mirror and on the refrigerator.

The reminders kept me motivated to find out what I needed to do - learn the right skills, find a good speakers' bureau, etc. - set a timetable... and then take action. Speaking and directing workshops around the world is what I do now.

While it's vital to have a concrete goal in mind, you can't be rigid. The mind is like a parachute. It only works when it is open. You don't really know what's out there until you start to look. Pursuing your goal is a learning process. Be receptive to what life is telling you, and be willing to change course accordingly.

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