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The Empower Letter with Mark Bowser

April 2005

Dear Don,

Welcome to this month's issue of *The Empower Letter*. I have a question for you: How is your year going so far? Now, I am not talking about in general such as, "It is going fine Mark. How about yours?" I am talking about your progress on your goals. Are you where you thought you would be at this point in the year? If not, read on because we at www.MarkBowser.com can help. If you are exactly where you want to be then that is great. I am confident that we can help you too! In this newsletter, you will find insights to help take you to the next level of success. No matter where you are in life, we at www.MarkBowser.com want to be your partner on the road of success. Let's team up together and....Make it a Great Day for your Success! God bless,

Mark Bowser

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1. One Champion's Roadmap to Success

by Mark Bowser

Success leaves clues. In order for us to become champions, we must watch champions. If we model what they do, think what they think, believe what they believe, learn what they learned then we will get similar results. One such champion I think we can learn from is one of our

Featured Article



Mark Bowser is "providing inspiration to individuals and organizations through effective training that produces Positive Results!" Mark Bowser is one of the top Professional Speakers and Corporate Trainers in the market today. Organizations he has trained include Southwest Airlines, Makino, Inc., Ford Motor Company, The Kellogg Company, FedEx Logistics, the United States Air Force, and many many more.

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founding fathers, Benjamin Franklin. His autobiography is probably one of the first American self-help books on the topic of success. Benjamin Franklin had a goal of Moral Perfection. Even though he never reached that goal, Franklin believes the endeavor for perfection made him a happier, more successful person. Franklin discovered that habit was the key to success. Franklin observed,

It was about this time I conceiv'd the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection. I wish'd to live without committing any fault at any time; I would conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not always do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined. While my care was emply'd in guarding against one fault, I was often surpris'd by another; habit took the advantage of inattention; inclination was sometimes too strong for reason. I concluded, at length, that the mere speculative conviction that it was our interest to be completely virtuous, was not sufficient to prevent our slipping; and that the contrary habits must be broken, and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any dependence on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct. For this purpose I therefore contriv'd the following method.

Franklin's method consisted of 13 virtues. He would focus on one virtue at a time. He would spend one week focusing on that virtue and then he would move on to the next virtue. Every night, Franklin would record in a book on his progress. He would mark every transgression he made that day not only in the virtue he was focusing on but in all 13 virtues. Hard you might say; difficult; take too much time! Well, the road to success has never been easy and that is why there is plenty of room at the top. Well, my friend, I am climbing the mountain of success and I want you with me. So, I suggest that we take Benjamin Franklin as one of our guides to the top of the mountain of success. Let's dig into each of his 13 virtues and his words of what they mean.

1. TEMPERANCE.

Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

Franklin believed in being in control of mind and body. If we are out of control, then is it possible to succeed? I say no. Any success that might be accomplished while being out of control would come out of luck and would not be lasting.

2. SILENCE.

Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

We have been told since childhood that if we can't say

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something nice then don't say anything at all. Good advice.

3. ORDER.

Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

It has been said that many people spend an extra four hours every week looking for something they know is on their desk but still can't find it. Sound familiar? This happened to be the virtue that Franklin struggled with the most. For some of us, order is not an easy task to accomplish. But success moves with order. Athletes talk about getting "in the zone", writers and speakers talk about the outline that flows, and mothers talk about bedrooms that-well, you know. Success and order go hand in hand. I am not saying your desk, office, or room has to be spotless. What I am saying is that you have to have an order that works for you. Arrange your space so that every thing you need on a consistent basis is in easy reach. Arrange your time in a way that improves your productivity. For me, that means Goalets List (to do list). Find what works for you and then stick with it.

4. RESOLUTION.

Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

You know what you need to do to succeed. Now, go do it!

5. FRUGALITY.

Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.

Be wise with money. Be a good steward of all that God has blessed us with.

6. INDUSTRY.

Lose no time; be always employ'd in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

One of the areas that wastes a lot of my time is television. I love to veg out in front of the tube. However, I could be using that time to work on my dreams and goals. Now, don't misunderstand me, I am not saying don't watch T.V. I am saying that we all could probably watch a little less T.V. We need to plan our week. What shows do we really want to watch? Alright, then let's watch those. Where we will save a lot of valuable time is when we will stop watching shows we don't care about watching. We plo down in the chair, grab the remote, and start flipping. Don't see anything good there so let's flip some more. Before we know it, we have spent an hour flipping channels, watching nothing, and wasting time.

7. SINCERITY.

Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly, and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

I believe the best way to accomplish this is to open our Bibles and live what we commonly call The Golden Rule. "Do for others what you would like them to do for you. This is a summary of all that is taught in the law and the prophets." (Matthew 7:12 NLT)

8. JUSTICE.

Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

The Golden Rule pretty much sums this one up too.

9. MODERATION.

Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

Forgive people. Most people who are rude to us or do something to hurt us are in fact hurting themselves. Love them. Find a need and fill it.

10. CLEANLINESS.

Tolerate no uncleanness in body, cloaths, or habitation.

Is dressing for success really that important? I believe it is. I am not saying you have to have the best shoes and the most expensive outfits. Not at all. I am saying, we need to look sharp and smell good. Our first impression is important.

11. TRANQUILLITY.

Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

Be proactive at all times. Have some quiet time everyday. A time to reflect and to think.

12. CHASTITY.

Rarely use venery but for health or offspring, never to dullness, weakness, or the injury of your own or another's peace or reputation.

King Solomon, the wisest of earthly kings had some great advise for all of us.

"Choose a good reputation over great riches, for being held in high esteem is better than having silver or gold."
(Proverbs 22:1 NLT)

"Drink water from your own well---share your love only with your wife. Why spill the water of your springs in public, having sex with just anyone? You should reserve it

for yourselves. Don't share it with strangers." (Proverbs 5:15-17 NLT)

13. HUMILITY.

Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

Many times when we think of humility, we think of mild mannered and weak. Nothing could be further from the truth. Humility is great strength. Humility is having so much confidence in yourself and the ability that God has given you that you don't have to brag. Jesus Christ never bragged. He told the truth with great confidence and conviction. That is the way I want to be. So as the little bracelets say, "WWJD" -What Would Jesus Do? Well, there we have it, Benjamin Franklin's 13 virtues for success. If we follow them, how can we not reach the mountaintop of success? Even though we can not keep them perfectly, I am confident that we like Franklin will say, "But, on the whole, tho' I never arrived at the perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was, by the endeavour, a better and a happier man than I otherwise should have been if I had not attempted it...."

2. AVOIDING 'MENTAL FLABBINESS'

by Dr. John C. Maxwell

I have a designated "thinking chair" in my office. I don't sit in it when someone drops by to talk. I don't take power naps in it. I use it only for thinking.

This chair doesn't think for me, but it does speak to me every now and then. If I've gone a few days without sitting in it, its presence subtly reminds me that I'm not devoting enough time to the all-important task of thinking.

When we fail to make thinking a priority, we develop what author Gordon MacDonald calls "mental flabbiness." This may not sound like a life-threatening condition, but some ways, it can be quite dangerous. Here's how MacDonald explains it:

"In our pressurized society, people who are out of shape mentally usually fall victim to ideas and systems that are destructive to the human spirit and to the human relationship," he writes. "They are victimized because they have not taught themselves how to think, nor have they set themselves to the lifelong pursuit of growth of the mind. Not having the faculty of a strong mind, they grow dependent upon the thoughts and opinions of others. Rather than deal with ideas and issues, they reduce themselves to lives full of rules, regulations, and programs."

You can't be an effective leader with a mindset like that-it's just not possible.

Fortunately, there is an antidote to mental flabbiness: making time to think. I realize this can be a daunting assignment for people whose schedules are already bursting at the seams. And yet, when we don't make thinking a priority, we're actually sabotaging our own creativity and success.

Think about it. One of the highest commodities in a person's life is a great idea. A great idea has transforming power. It can take you places you may never have dreamed of going. But great ideas don't come out of nowhere. They begin as thoughts. So it stands to reason that the more time we spend thinking, the more great ideas we'll have.

The good news is that it doesn't take hours of thinking each day to generate ideas and stay in good mental shape. You can accomplish a great deal in a few moments of concentrated, intentional thought.

Let me give you two examples of how this works in my life. Every morning, I devote three minutes to what I call "big-picture thinking." I look at my schedule for the day and ask myself one simple question: What's the main event? Of all the things I'm going to do, of all the people I'm going to see, of all the experiences that I'm going to encounter, what's the main event?

You can't prioritize your day if you don't see everything in your day. That's why I practice big-picture thinking in the morning. I have to pick out my main event early, because whatever it is, that's where I had better be at my best. I'm human, and I don't always hit the ball out of the park. Sometimes I don't hit the ball at all. But at the main event, I had better hit a homerun. Big-picture thinking helps me achieve that goal.

At the end of the day, I spend another five to 10 minutes doing what I refer to as "reflective thinking." I go to my thinking chair and spend time reviewing my whole day. I ask myself questions such as, "Who did I see today? How did I add value to those people? What lessons did I learn?" Reflective thinking doesn't take long, but it's an incredibly valuable exercise because it turns experience into insight.

Can you imagine what would happen in your life if you practiced big-picture and reflective thinking? You would stop wasting time on things that don't really matter, which would give you more energy for the really important activities. You would be more organized and efficient. You would experience less stress. Most importantly, you would also take more away from each day that would enable you

to lead better the next day.

The best way to start this process is to designate a specific place to think. It doesn't matter if your "thinking chair" is in your den at home or your office at work. It just has to be a spot where you can do nothing but think for a few moments twice a day.

The bottom line is this: If you find a place to think your thoughts, you'll have more thoughts. If you find a place to shape your thoughts, you will have better thoughts. And if you find a place to stretch your thoughts, you will have bigger thoughts.

All this, from just three minutes in the morning and five to ten minutes at night. As you can see, the results far outweigh the time investment.

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What People Are Saying... Abraham Lincoln quotes to Live By!

"What kills a skunk is the publicity it gives itself"

"The best thing about the future is that it comes only one day at a time."

"You cannot build character and courage by taking away man's initiative and independence. You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves."

"I do the very best I know how---the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end."

"My dream is of a place and a time where America will once again be seen as the last best hope of earth."

"I will prepare and some day my chance will come."

"Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any other one thing."

"Am I not destroying my enemies when I make friends of them?"

" 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free."

"Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on the continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

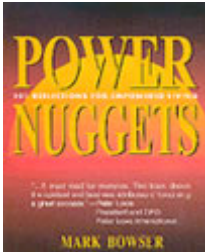
"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in."

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