Life Is A Gift... So Enjoy It!: Strategies for Leading a Healthy, Balanced & Rewarding Life

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Life Is A Gift... So Enjoy It!: Strategies for Leading a Healthy, Balanced & Rewarding Life
* Senior Project *

Written by,
Robert C. Stafford

Presented in partial fulfillment for requirements of the Western Washington University Honors Program
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HONORS THESIS

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Date 6/14/00
In an ever-quickening and hectic world, time is of the essence and stress seems to become more and more a part of our lives. As we volunteer and are asked to undertake more and more responsibility, it is of growing importance that we first, know where it is we want to go; second, understand how to use our valuable time to in the best way to get us there and; third, be able to enjoy the ride.

Too often the most important things in life are hostage to the things that matter least. Our lives are filled with so many things that we must do, that we feel trapped, literally unable to do anything. In his book, *The Harried Leisure Class*, Steffan A. Linder (1970) points out that the pace and pressures of life become so insane that eventually people feel like they’re losing control of their lives. There is no worse feeling than sensing that other people or external circumstances govern what we do (and when and how we do it), feeling that we are puppets on a string, being yanked back and forth by forces over which we have no influence. Everyone wants to be in control of their life and this control comes through identifying what is truly important to us and vowing to live every day by these principles.

Through the concentrated efforts of: (1) learning to control our time, (2) identifying our governing values, (3) being productive, (4) leaving our comfort zones, (5) setting goals, (6) implementing daily prioritized planning, (7) developing our character and habits, (8) participating in regular physical activity, (9) finding sources of social support and (10) recognizing the ultimate source of our self-esteem we may uncover this much-needed clarity. We will begin to feel and recognize what it is that resonates within us; that which makes our lives seem worthwhile. We will at the same time gain the confidence and focus necessary to handle the everyday commotion and have the energy...
left at the end of the day to enjoy it. The ultimate goal is, after all, to be happy and to have fun with the challenges life presents us... so that we may feel the exhilaration of mastering them.

**Time Management**

The argument for time management is somewhat circular but still bears stating: controlling our lives means controlling our time, and controlling our time means controlling our lives. Time management is only a set of skills and tools to help us more efficiently control the events in our lives. That is, we must identify what it is that we really want to do, not just the mechanics of keeping track of what we’re doing, and gain control of the events in our life.

What is important is not that there are uncontrollable events in our lives, but how we respond to them. Often the most realistic response is to adapt (Bliss, 1976). It makes no sense to get upset over things we can’t control. Too often we waste time complaining about the weather, or futilely trying to control or manipulate significant others, coworkers, or friends. We may think we can control other people’s behavior and we may impact their behavior to some degree, but ultimately what other people do is out of our control. Instead, we must adapt. These situations are out of what Stephen Covey, author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (1989), calls our Circle of Control. The only other choice is to be perpetually stressed out.

There are events, however, over which we can have total control: when we get up, what we wear, what we eat, how we react to somebody else’s attitude. What do all these focus on? Us. The only thing we have absolute and total control over is our self (Mackenzie, 1972; Orlick, 1998). Everything else is partial control or no control. We do
our best to manage events that rob us of our time - some imposed and some self-inflicted, such as interruptions and procrastination, respectively - focus on that which have control, and then live with the rest. Personal satisfaction is having serenity, balance, and harmony in our lives through the appropriate control of events (Lakein, 1973). The real issue is: What events can I control? Focusing, then, on “event control” makes all the difference.

Event control also brings about an increase in self-esteem. There is a direct relationship between self-esteem and productive work, with the key intermediary being that of event control (Orlick, 1998). If we can exert greater control over the events in our lives, we can become more productive, better organized, and spend more time on activities that are of value to us (Winston, 1978). The natural by-product of that is an increase in our sense of self-worth.

As we get more control over the events in our lives, we feel better about ourselves. And as we get more control over things that matter a great deal to us, we feel terrific. Keep in mind two very important questions: What are the highest priorities in my life? and Of these priorities, which do I value the most? (Smith, 1994) Do we think the most urgent events in our lives are the most important? Think again.

Urgencies, in the strictest sense of the word, are not priorities; they act on priorities. In other words, something may be valuable, but until an urgency is placed on it, it just tends to lie there (Pitino & Reynolds, 1997). We tend to put off the highly valued task because we’re dealing with urgencies all day. Some tasks are never going to be urgent, even though they may be extremely vital. Other tasks may never be important, but they will be urgent (such as when the phone rings). The secret is to identify our vital activities and infuse them with a sense of urgency, so that they can compete with the
activities that have a natural sense of urgency built into them (Orlick, 1998). For instance, if studying is important to us, how can we make a schoolbook ring? The only way to do this is to set up a system that takes our deepest values and translates them into daily activities. Before we start planning our time we must identify those things that really are the most important in our lives.

**Governing Values**

Each of us lives his or her life according to a unique set of governing values. Our governing values are uncovered by again asking ourselves the initial two questions: *What are the highest priorities in my life?* and *Of these priorities, which do I value most?* These aren’t simple questions by any means. The process, if we are honest with ourselves, may take up to seven or eight hours, but it will be the most rewarding experience of our lives (Smith, 1994). Having our values exposed causes us to evaluate them, reconsider them, and perhaps even change them. And while our daily performance relating to those values is never perfect, as our performance improves something wonderful happens. American psychologist, Abraham Maslow, called this “self-actualization,” a bringing together of what we do and who we really are (Hauck, 1976).

When we have strong emotions about what identifying what really matters to us, something happens inside. We start looking at daily activities in a completely different light. We start asking ourselves, “Is what I’m doing today what really matters to me in my life?” When we realize how important certain values are to us, suddenly we experience a sense of urgency that wasn’t there before. Activities that were always important now become both important and urgent and, when that happens, behavior changes.
Once we identify our personal governing values, we must write them down and form our own constitutions. We should soar for the ideal and imagine ourselves as we want to be (Vernacchia, 1998). Over time, as we grow and change, we will probably want to revise or amend our constitutions, in order to meet changing times and challenges. But the fundamentals of our constitutions shouldn’t change a great deal. The important thing is to put into words some descriptive statements that are meaningful to us about what those values mean in our lives (Orlick, 1998). As those things that really are of greatest importance begin to emerge on paper, we will experience a sense of clarity and purpose unlike anything we have felt before.

**Productivity**

In order to be productive, we must determine our daily activities through the lens of our values. By identifying our governing values, we set our long-range goals, which, in turn, drive our intermediate goals, which then determine our daily tasks. Values explain *why* we want to accomplish certain things in life, long-range goals describe *what* we want to accomplish, and intermediate goals and daily tasks show *how* to do it (Gould, 1998). Progression through the chain requires consistency and a sharper focus as we move from the long term to the short term and enlists an increasing degree of specificity (Gould, 1998). If our daily activities are guided in this manner by our fundamental values, we will feel the satisfaction that comes from succeeding at those things that mean the most to us.

We must avoid assuming that we’re finished forming our moral center once we’ve merely identified our governing values. Identifying our values is not enough. We must also rank them in order of priority (Vernacchia, McGuire, & Cook, 1996). Otherwise, we
won't know which of our goals and daily activities are most important. For example, if one of our goals is to make money and another is that we wish to be honest in all things, if we don't prioritize those values we inevitably wind up with conflicting goals and daily activities and the constant need to make perplexing decisions. Uncertain priorities lead to situations in which actions are not determined by values or principles, but by the desirable ends they may produce (Hauck, 1976). The key is in making the decision based on which value is most important, not on the whim of the moment.

**Comfort Zones**

In order to reach any significant goal (which we talk about shortly), we must be willing to try something new, to leave our comfort zone, for this is the only way we truly learn and achieve anything. Our comfort zone, of course, is a place where we feel comfortable, safe, and secure. These havens can be incredibly difficult to leave and, in fact, it's a natural tendency for us to gravitate toward our comfort zones (Winston, 1978). External or physical comfort zones are easy to understand – our house, our classrooms, the building where we work – but they are by no means the only type of comfort zones we have. Sometimes we develop mental, emotional, social, or psychological comfort zones, ones that are with us at all times, regardless of where we may travel beyond our familiar physical surroundings (Covey 1989; Zinsser, Bunker, & Williams, 1998). These can be much more difficult, but much more important, to leave than our physical comfort zones. So since familiarity breeds comfort and comfort breeds confidence, the more we can venture outside of both of our comfort zones, the more familiar we become with the world around us and the more comfortable and confident we will be in undertaking the challenges asked of us.
Goal Setting

A goal is a planned conflict with the status quo. By definition, then, reaching a goal means doing something new, leaving familiar, comfortable terrain of our comfort zones and exploring new frontiers. Goals usually push us toward new behaviors we’d rather not have to worry about (Bliss, 1976). For example, if we write down a goal and don’t reach it, what have we done? We have failed. And in our society we have adopted a myth that says failure is bad. If we fail, people will think we’re good for nothing. Even if we succeed, people may not like the way we’ve changed. We seemingly can’t win. The important point here to note is: failure is not the end of the world. We can pick ourselves up, learn from our mistakes, and try again and again until we succeed (Pitino & Reynolds, 1997). In fact, if we are not willing to fail, we probably won’t have the motivation to succeed. Failure, in this sense, can be a positive force in our lives, not something to be afraid of. So often the opinions of others deter us from setting goals and trying to change. But if we don’t set goals, we are just surviving, not really living, not to the degree we could if we took charge of our lives.

“Someday, when I have the time, I’m going to...” How many times have we said this? Whatever we put at the end of that phrase represents a desire, a wish, a value in our lives. It is not uncommon for each of us to recognize an area of our lives that has suffered neglect. If we felt any such feelings, perhaps that is an indication of where we should start our personal goal setting. We’ll never achieve that desire and we’ll always have regrets unless we do something about it (McKay, Davis, & Fanning, 1981). We may have long-range goals swimming around in our heads, but nothing’s going to happen until we jerk those unformulated goals out of the air, plant them at some point in the future, come
back to today, and do our homework. We can only make goals for the future so shouldn’t waste time and energy on the past. We must start controlling the only increment of time over which we have any control: Right now.

We must set SMART goals (Smith, 1994):

Specific
Measurable
Action-oriented
Realistic
Timely

Writing goals forces us to be specific, so that we know whether or not we’ve reached our goal. Goals should be measurable, because we can only improve on what we can measure. Goals should always focus on actions rather than personal qualities. Goals must be realistic. It’s good to aim high, but if we aim too high, we can get discouraged and the goal-setting process can become just another fruitless activity. Goals that are too easily reached are just as useless and unrealistic as goals that are too far beyond our reach. Goals must also be timely. We shouldn’t set a goal for which we honestly don’t have time for right now. And we shouldn’t give ourselves so much time that the goal becomes meaningless.

The determination has to come from within us. Value-based goals are the forces that focus our efforts and start us moving out of our respective ruts but, if we take our eye off our goals for any reason, we will become unfocused and careless, easily diverted from our objective (Vernacchia, McGuire, & Cook, 1996). Once we have done our homework, then nothing needs to get in the way of achieving our goals.
Daily Prioritized Planning

There is a term in finance called leverage, in which a company employs a small amount of debt to increase its overall return. Time, likewise, can also be leveraged. Investing a little of our time in certain activities can actually free up time throughout the rest of the day. A daily planning session can act as a time lever. The cost is small – only ten to fifteen minutes a day – but we will enjoy many benefits all day long (Lakein, 1973). The more time we spend on planning a project, the less total time is required for it. We will see such benefits as clearly defined tasks with deadlines, increased focus on more important tasks, less time spent between projects, and a greater sense of accomplishment at the end of the day.

Somewhere in our day, there is a fifteen-minute period of otherwise wasted time which we can use for planning (Smith, 1994).

1. Find a place that is relatively free of distractions.
2. Review the long-range objectives.
3. Make sure the number of tasks and the amount of time required by each is well within the time available in our day.
4. Set specific daily goals for tasks.
5. Anticipate obstacles.
6. Prioritize our tasks.

During our ten to fifteen minutes of planning time, we are focusing all of our energy and power on the answers to the two questions: What are the highest priorities in my life? and Of these priorities, which do I value most? Rank each task in order of importance and then cross it off when it is finished. (Why does this action feel so good? Much like during
exercise, crossing off items on a “to do” list causes endorphins to be released, creating a pleasurable effect! (Pitino & Reynolds, 1997) We must focus time and energy on our daily activities through the lens of our governing values and goals. If they are foremost in our minds, we will accomplish those things that are most important to us.

Now comes the real test. Making a commitment is fine; it is the first step in the right direction. But keeping the commitment is another matter altogether. The choice is ours and the only real variable is something called character.

**Character and Habit**

Character, simply stated, is doing what we say we’re going to do. The ability to make and keep promises is another possible definition (Covey, 1989). A more formal definition is: *Character is the ability to carry out a worthy decision after the emotion of making that decision has passed.* Discipline is not something we can acquire in a moment and then forget about. We must develop the personal resolve to carry through, even when the going gets tough. That’s when the power of habit can help.

We are all creatures of habit, whether we like it or not. Even though the inertia of habits often keeps us in our comfort zone instead of reaching our goals, habits in and of themselves are not necessarily bad. In fact, life would be a nightmare without them. We would have to make conscious decisions at every turn and nothing would be automatic. The only pertinent question regarding habit is this: *Am I willing to develop good habits or am I content to develop bad ones?* (Pitino & Reynolds, 1997)

Good habits will be consistent with our governing values. That is the way they are good. And if we are people of character, then our good habits must not vary when external circumstances change, no matter how uncomfortable those circumstances might
be. Giving in to external circumstances is a sign of weak character. The right habits can help us get through the tough places – the times when our resolve falters or when following through with a commitment is inconvenient (Hauck, 1976). Keeping commitments, then, is a matter of character, of will power.

**Physical Activity**

While a majority of this discussion focuses on the mind, physical activity is vital in the health and maintenance of both the body *and* the mind. There is much agreement that being physically fit makes a person feel good. Physically fit individuals can tolerate stress better and maintain longer periods of mental alertness. Getting regular exercise that improves fitness also helps a person stay healthy.

One major benefit of exercise is that people who increase their physical activity are more likely to adopt other lifestyle habits that further lower their risks of both cancer and cardiovascular disease (Griggs, 1990; Krantzler & Miner, 1994). People who exercise are also likely to eat less, to cope more effectively with stress, and even to quit an established smoking habit (Griggs). These changes can create a synergistic effect, in which the benefits build upon one another to improve health and further lower the risks of disease.

In short, the benefits of being physically fit are many. Physical fitness can result in a *longer life span*. Maybe not contrary to popular belief, but physically fit individuals are less likely to die early than sedentary individuals (9% less for men and 15% less for women) (Krantzler & Miner, 1997). Regular activity results in *physiological improvements*. Exercise strengthens muscle and bone. It works the circulatory and respiratory systems, so they deliver needed amounts of food and oxygen to the cells with
less effort (Griggs, 1990). Exercise helps to develop coordination, balance and reaction
time, which help people conduct everyday activities (Vernacchia, 1998). Other benefits
include: stronger heart, lower blood pressure, increased metabolism, longevity and
positive changes in the aging process, oxygen delivery, and healthier immune system
(Krantzler & Miner). Physical activity provides for many *psychological and psychosocial
benefits* as well.

There seems to be a strong association between fitness and psychological well-being. Exercise is a good way to release tension. Studies indicate that people who
exercise regularly are less tired, more relaxed, more productive at work, more satisfied
with their appearance and more self-confident (Griggs, 1990). Some key psychological
and psychosocial benefits of regular exercise include: stress reduction, higher self-
esteeem, reduction in or prevention of depression and social benefits (Krantzler & Miner,
1994; Williams, Rotella, & Heyman, 1998).

*Stress reduction:* Vigorous exercise is an important tool to managing stress. Stress
can appear as tension, anxiety or a pounding heart. Other signs of stress include difficulty
falling asleep, compulsive eating and perspiring heavily. Reasons exercise is effective in
managing stress include: (1) It temporarily removes a person from the stressors of daily
life; (2) It improves an individual’s mood. Exercise produces relaxation and feelings of
confidence in one’s abilities; and (3) Exercising provides an opportunity to think out
problems and work out feelings (Williams, Rotella, & Heyman, 1998).

*Higher self-esteem:* Self-esteem can be enhanced by mastering exercise goals that
earlier seemed impossible to meet. Improvements in coordination, muscle tone, posture,
and complexion help people feel good about themselves (Henschen, 1998).
Reduction in or prevention of depression: Depression often is associated with a lack of physical and mental activity (Henschen, 1998; Williams, Rotella, & Heyman, 1998). Exercise has been found to be a useful way to counter mild depression. Endorphins are produced in greater quantity during exercise, and this increased production may cause improvements in mood, appetite and even memory.

Social benefits: Activities can be solitary or social. When activities are done with family or friends, bonds can be strengthened and companionship enjoyed. These social ties are keys to maintaining our health and sense of well-being and it is important to recognize the roles that others play in our lives.

Social Support

While we may be able to think through, rationalize and overcome most of our daily challenges on our own, the needs to love and be loved, to be comforted, to feel important, to experience variety and simply to share with one another take over eventually. We are, by nature, social creatures who require social interaction.

Social contact, in particular, is put at a premium today in the “age of technology.” As we are exposed to more and more stimulating information at ever-quickening speeds on the Information Superhighway, we are, at the same time, kept from the voice or touch of any human being. We are growing smarter intellectually, indeed, but we are also seeing our social skills deteriorate. Technology is a tool, a very beneficial tool – much like time management, goal setting, and the like that we have previously discussed – but one for us to control to make our lives easier, not the other way around.
Self-Esteem

When we seek validations externally, we lose control over our lives. We behave according to someone else’s values and principles rather than our own. And sometimes we are just guessing at what will please others. We find ourselves acting on nothing better than our own perception (or misperception) of their lives. This is a highly reactive way of living and it is incredibly stressful.

Very often we let the social climate in which we live determine what we believe (Branden, 1980; Branden, 1984; Vernacchia, 1998). We accept the values of the larger group, without considering their impact on either our behavior or our feeling of self-worth. Whenever we accept someone else’s prejudice against us – that we are inferior in any way – we give them a degree of control in our lives and our sense of self-worth suffers.

We don’t have to accept judgments that demean us or make us feel inferior. What other people believe doesn’t affect how we feel about ourselves unless we let it (Branden, 1980; Branden, 1984; Covey, 1997). It doesn’t matter what other people think. If we accept ourselves and our values and live according to them, the world will accept us too. In fact, the people who seem to constantly struggle for acceptance are those who are counterfeit, who are not true to their values or who they are. Our happiness and success depend on our being ourselves and living up to our own unique potential.

Conclusion

The secret to achieving inner peace lies in understanding our inner core values – those things in our lives that are most important to us – and then seeing that they are reflected in the daily events of our lives. In other words, doing a better job of managing
our time is meaningless unless we are managing it to accomplish those things that are of
greatest importance to us (Bliss, 1970). The aim is to feel no guilt.

Too often we find ourselves reflecting on all the things we would have done, or
could have done, or should have done and we have all of the uncomfortable feelings that
follow. We get so caught up in urgencies and in doing things that we think we have to do
that the things that matter most tend to be overlooked (Vemacchia, 1998). Ultimately, we
want to feel good about ourselves. We want to be excited to get up in the morning. We
want to be in control of what can be controlled. The exciting thing is that this is not only
possible – it is also doable.

By practicing and perfecting the strategies outlined above we will experience
significant increases in personal control and fulfillment. We will be able to struggle to do
what our governing values are screaming at us to do (Covey, 1997). We will know what
it is like to get up in the morning knowing exactly where we are going, why, and how to
get there. We will know what it is like to have time to spend with our family and friends
when we want to because we are in control of things in our worlds (Pitino, 1997). We
will know what it is like to go to bed at night knowing that we have accomplished what
really mattered to us that day and, though we may not have made it to everything that we
would have liked to have gotten done, the things that were done were the vital tasks, the
things that meant the most to us. The best advice: “Be yourself – but be that perfectly”
(Smith, 1994); a task that we are all capable of doing.
REFERENCE LIST


Life Is A Gift... So Enjoy It!

Strategies for Leading a Healthy, Balanced & Rewarding Life

* Honors Senior Project *

Robert C. Stafford
June 16, 2000
Strategies

- Learning to control our Time
- Identifying our Governing Values
- Being Productive
- Leaving our Comfort Zones
- Setting Goals
- Implementing Daily Prioritized Planning

- Developing our Character & Habits
- Participating in regular Physical Activity
- Recognizing the importance of Social Support
- Remembering the ultimate source of our Self-Esteem
Time Management

- Only a set of tools to control events
- Identify what we really want to do
- Control what we can
  - No: Weather, people’s behavior
  - Yes: When we get up, our reaction to others
- “Do our best then live with the rest”
- Focus on event control
Time Management

- Self-esteem \(\rightarrow\) Event control \(\rightarrow\) Productive work
- Easiest to manipulate is event control
- Greater control over events = greater self-esteem
- Get more control over events that matter most
- Two important questions:
  - What are the highest priorities in my life?
  - Of these priorities, which do I value most?
Time Management

- Urgencies are not priorities
- Often highly-valued tasks set aside
- Infuse a sense of urgency
- “How do we make a school book ring?”
- Identify those things that are really the most important
Governing Values

Each of us lives by a unique set of values.

Framed by the two key questions:

Be honest with ourselves.

Daily performance is never perfect but will improve over time.

"Self-actualization."
Governning Values

- Start looking at daily activities in a new light
- “Is what I’m doing today what really matters to me in my life?”
- A sudden sense of urgency
- Activities become important *and* urgent
Governing Values

- Form our own constitutions
- May change over time
- Fundamentals will remain about the same
- Important to put into words what those values mean in our lives
- Experience a new-found sense of clarity and purpose
Productivity

- Determine activities through the lens of our values
- Governing values → Long-range goals → Intermediate goals → Daily tasks
- *Why, What, How*
- Consistency and focus
- Increasing degree of specificity
Productivity

- Rank values in order of priority
- Avoid conflicting goals and the constant need to make perplexing decisions
- Avoid “the end justifying the means”
- Be value and principle-driven
- Resist the whim of the moment
Comfort Zones

Must leave in order to learn and achieve anything difficult and naturally drawn to the familiar.

Both external and internal especially important to leave the internal.
Comfort Zones

- Familiarity → Comfort → Confidence
- Feel more familiar
- Be more comfortable and confident when undertaking challenges
- Practice will make the unfamiliar seem second nature
Goal Setting

- Planned conflict with the status quo
- Goal: doing something new, leaving comfort zones
- Myth of failure... We seemingly can’t win
- Be willing to fail so we can be motivated to succeed
- Learn from mistakes and make them a positive force in our lives
- “If we don’t set goals, we are just surviving, not really living, not to the degree we could if we took charge of our lives”
Goal Setting

- “Someday, when I have the time, I’m going to...”
- Can only make goals for the future
- Don’t waste time and energy on the past
- Grab the ideas swimming in your head and cement them to a point in the future
- We can only control: Right now
Goal Setting

- Set SMART goals:
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Action-oriented
  - Realistic
  - Timely
- Determination must be intrinsic
- Focus and do our homework
Daily Prioritized Planning

- Time, like finances, can be leveraged
- Small investment: 10 – 15 minutes a day
- Clearly defined tasks with deadlines
- Less time spent between projects
- Greater sense of accomplishment at the end of the day
Daily Prioritized Planned

During our planning period:

- Find a place relatively free of distractions
- Review long-range objectives
- Make sure number of tasks, and amount of time required for them, are within the time available to us
- Set specific daily goals for tasks
- Anticipate obstacles
- Prioritize our tasks

Anticipate obstacles
Daily Prioritized Planning

- Focus all our energy on the two initial questions.
- Rank each task in order of importance and cross it off when finished.
- Maintain the lens of our governing values and goals = accomplishing those things that are the most important to us.
Character and Habit

Do what we say we’re going to do

“The ability to make and keep promises”

Definition: The ability to carry out a worthy decision after the emotion of making that decision has passed

Develop resolve and determination to consistently carry through
Character and Habit

We are all creatures of habit, like it or not.

Though often keep us in our comfort zones, life would be a nightmare without them.

Only pertinent question: Am I willing to develop good habits or am I content to develop bad ones?
Character and Habit

Good habits are consistent with our governing values. If of good character, our good habits must not vary with changing circumstances. The right habits can help get through the tough places, when resolve falters. Keeping commitments is a matter of character, of will power.
Physical Activity

Vital to the body and the mind
Tolerate stress better
Maintain longer periods of mental alertness
Stay healthy
Adopt habits that reduce cancer and cardiovascular disease
Eat less, cope more effectively with stress, quit established bad habits
Synergistic effect of benefits combating risks of disease
Physical Activity

- Longer life span
- Strengthens muscle and bone
- Physiological improvements
- Psychological and psychosocial benefits
  - Stress reduction, higher self-esteem, reduction in or prevention of depression and social benefits
Social Support

Others play important roles in our lives.

Needs to:

- Love and be loved
- Be comforted
- Feel important
- Experience variety
- Share with others
Social Support

- Placed at a premium in "age of technology"
- Growing smarter but losing social skills
- Technology is a beneficial tool to be controlled to make our lives easier, not other way around
Self-Esteem

- Ultimately, self-esteem must come from within.
- Sometimes only guessing at what will please others – a highly reactive and stressful way of living.
- Often accept group values without considering their effect on our behavior.
- Accepting another’s prejudice against us gives them a degree of control in our lives = our sense of self-worth suffers.
Self-Esteem

- What other people believe doesn’t affect how you feel about yourself unless you let it.
- It doesn’t matter what other people think.
- Conform to your own uniqueness and values.
- “Happiness and success depend on our being ourselves and living up to our unique potential.”
Conclusion

Keys to inner peace:

- Understanding our core values
- Seeing that those values are reflected in the daily events of our lives
- Managing our time is meaningless unless we accomplish things that are most important to us

we should accomplish things that are most important to us
Conclusion

- Avoid the "I wish I would, could, should, haves".
- Infuse the things that matter most with a sense of urgency.
- Feel excited to get up in the morning.
- Get control of our lives.
Conclusion

- Struggle to do what our governing values scream at us to do
- Know where we want to go, why and how to get there when we get up in the morning
- Have time to spend with family and friends
- Feel a genuine sense of accomplishment at the end of the day
- “Be yourself – but be that perfectly”