



If you believe that your health is holding you back from optimal performance, make a commitment to exercise or set up a training plan with a fitness club.

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# Self-development begins with you

Stop making excuses – work on the five keys to achieve your potential

I RECENTLY had the displeasure of working with one of the most negative people I have ever met. Let's call her Cindy.

In Cindy's world, nothing good ever happens to her, the rain only falls in her part of town and there is a conspiracy to keep her from succeeding. The interesting thing about Cindy is that she is intelligent, articulate and has lots of potential.

The problem is that she will never realise her true potential if she does not change her attitudes and beliefs about who is responsible for her development.

She constantly blames the organisation she works with for not "training her more", she blames the government for taking all of her expendable income (through taxes) so she cannot go back to school, and she blames her family for taking up all of her time so she can never get anything done.

The one person who Cindy never blames is Cindy, and as a result she never improves in any facets of her life.

Unfortunately, many of us see the world this way.

When we consider personal or professional development, it is too easy to blame external factors for our own shortcomings.

The reality is that making an excuse is the easy way out, and making a positive change in your life comes down to you making a conscious decision to take action without waiting for someone else to initiate it.

Are you ready to start working on personal growth? If so, here are five keys to positive self-development that may be of value to you:

## 1 Whatever it is that you want to achieve, do something about it.

For example, if you would like to be more efficient at your job, and you work on spreadsheets all day but are not as fast as you could be, make a call and enrol in a night course that will sharpen your skills.

If you believe that your health is holding you back from optimal performance, call your local fitness club and set up a training plan.

Do it now and stop putting it off.

Making the commitment is the toughest part of any self-development plan, so get moving now and you will have the toughest part licked.

## 2 Choose one or two things at a time.

Do you have a laundry list of things you would like to work on? Sometimes, looking at a huge list of personal "to-dos" can be intimidating, and as a result, you do nothing.

I find it easier (and more productive) if I choose one personal and one professional self-development programme to tackle at a time.

You will be focused on the task at hand, you will not be overwhelmed, and as you complete one task after another, your confidence will grow.

## 3 Adopt a selfish attitude.

Too many people play the martyr and say: "I can't do anything for myself because I have to look after others."

Fair enough, but then how many dreams go unrequited because of this? How much potential is lost and unhappiness caused because you did not take care of yourself first?

The reality is that if you improve yourself, you will be able to do more for others and everyone will be happier.

If you sharpen your professional skills and get a raise because of it, you will be able to provide for your family better.

If you take time to exercise and find optimum health, you will be more confident, less stressed, and you will set a positive example for those around you.

You may have to be creative with your schedule and how you get things done, but you can do it.

## 4 Spend time with people who are at where you want to be.

Learn from mentors and adopt the attitudes of the successful. Most people who have been fortunate enough to succeed in this world have done so because they are confident, positive and hardworking.

Surround yourself with these people and you will start to understand how they came to succeed.

The people you spend time with have a massive influence on your attitudes and mindset, so be careful about this.

## 5 Recognise that it is all up to you.

Your growth and development is your responsibility — not the government's, your employer's, your family's or your religion's.

Mr Randy Gage, an American author, speaker and consultant on the topic of prosperity, recently said that when he looked back at his failed relationships, his crooked business partners, his bankrupt bank account and his failing health, he realised that there had only been one person at the scene of each of these "crimes". Him.

Are you the only one at the scene of your own failures? For most of us, this is the case.

Start taking some positive self-responsibility for your personal and professional growth.

Recognise that the choices you make now will impact your future.

A positive action today, even a small one, could lead you to a very positive tomorrow — and will help you to avoid becoming the neighbourhood Cindy.

*Article by Paul de Burger, associate consultant at d'Oz International, who is also a professional speaker from Western Canada. He is an expert in motivation, planning, sales and service. For information on his training and workshops, call 6391-3733, e-mail consultancy@d-oz.com, or visit www.d-oz.com*