

Success Is a Verb

DAN S. KENNEDY

What exactly is “peak performance” and how do you achieve it?

While different people may have nuanced differences of opinion about the definition, I would insist that there are some absolutes here – and that absolute clarity in your mind about what it is essential to consistently achieving it. On a casual Sunday drive it’s perfectly okay to wander around aimlessly. Not so here.

I own Standardbred racehorses and even drive professionally myself, in about 100 to 125 races a year. As owner or driver, I’m never disappointed by not winning or even failing to finish in the money when I know the horse has given his all and performed to the best of his potential. I can be mad as a wet hen, though, finishing second when I know the horse slacked a bit and could have won had he exerted himself to the max and gone all in. And not only do I know, the horses know. Some are diehard competitors, others are not so demanding of themselves. People are no different. You might have trouble articulating a perfect definition of peak performance, but you know when you are performing to the very best of your potential, and you know when you are not. **A peak performer is someone who insists on peak performance from himself.**

My definition, then, includes living up to your potential and doing whatever it is you are doing to the very best of your ability, while constantly working to expand and extend and strengthen that ability. I've long owned and taught a definition of a related item – “productivity” – as: measurable movement toward meaningful goals. If what you're doing isn't measurably moving you toward meaningful goals, it's not productivity. Just activity. You can run in place and be active.

Whatever your definition, you'll want to identify the factors that contribute to its achievement. For whatever it may be worth, here's my short list...

- Conducive Environment
- Physical Capability
- Intellectual Capability
- Information
- Organization
- Work
- Leverage
- Tolerance for Pain
- Beneficial Association

Briefly, one by one...

Conducive Environment

How can you achieve peak performance if you insist on placing yourself in environments that are not conducive to it? If you take or make important business calls on your cell phone while also driving, eating, peeing or, heaven forbid, doing all three, there's no way you can perform

at peak concentration, understanding, communication, and persuasion levels during that call. If you try writing, the work I do more of than anything else, where you can be interrupted, permit incoming calls, compulsively interrupt yourself to check e-mail, you cannot perform at peak levels of thought, creativity, or speed. And so on.

Most men (over age 30) wouldn't dream of trying to maintain an erection and have sex on a bed parked in the center strip of a busy freeway during rush hour, but they'll ask themselves to do vital and important work under similarly disadvantageous circumstances. I have long exercised militant control over my work environments and the access of others to me, and as a result seem to be more prolific and productive than any ten counterparts, to such an extent that "how Dan gets so much done" is constant cause of curiosity, rumor, and gossip. To others, my control of my environment is puzzling. I am puzzled by their persistent self-sabotage. Having said all that, peak performers do not require ideal conditions in order to perform well. In fact, a distinguishing characteristic is their determined effectiveness at creating good results even in the least conducive circumstances. After all, anyone can look good when everybody looks good. But they also strive to give themselves the advantage of conducive environment whenever possible, as often as possible.

Physical Capability

For about six or seven years I carried 240 to 250 pounds around with me. I'm not embarrassed about having been so far overweight; I'm not vain about my appearance. I'm embarrassed about having been so stupid. Going back further, for some years, I had a drinking problem and began most days hung over. Had I kept myself sober and rea-

sonably thin and fit throughout my life, I imagine I'd be a billionaire instead of a multi-millionaire, gotten there a lot sooner, and arrived a lot healthier, likely to live longer to enjoy it. Far, far, far from smart was I. So. If you check into a Las Vegas hotel with a fully mirrored bathroom, step out of the shower, see through steam a gigantic naked butt and belly and scream in terror at the naked fat man who has broken into your room, or you drink excessively or otherwise self-medicate, or you smoke like a chimney, or you stay up all night playing X-Box, or engage in any other behavior damaging to your physical health and wellbeing, yakking about peak performance is asinine. Get a grip.

These days I'm often asked how I've lost all the weight and kept it off. Most of the people asking are hoping I know of some secret diet – a simple one, of course – or have secured a supply of magic fat-burning pills I might be willing to share. Sadly, no. I just don't eat much crap and eat a lot less of everything than I once did. Heck, if I was willing to exercise too, I could look like the always-shirtless Mathew McConaughey.

Intellectual Capability

I'm afraid our national I.Q. is declining, at an accelerated pace. It seems people either don't, won't, or can't think. Peak performance requires the ability to sort fact from opinion, information from ideas, important from trivial, urgent from merely annoying; to organize priorities; to make decisions and solve problems at a rapid pace; think creatively, outside industry norms, customary methodology, tradition, peer opinion; prepare persuasive arguments; see further than the end of the tip of your nose to foretell the second, third, fourth, and delayed consequences of current actions and proactively control future events

and their impact on you, but also respond resiliently to all those you did not predict. (It's rarely the things we worry about that actually get us. It's the unexpected that blind-side us, and then it is how ably we respond to those that determine success.)

Intellectual capability is linked to intellectual *curiosity*. Most people are quite content knowing little about a few things, within a small, narrow, and comfortable realm; most people "can't find time" to read what comes their way, let alone seek more. The peak performers I know are voracious in acquiring, processing, storing and using, and thinking about a broad variety of information and diverse opinion, drawn from sources of obvious relevance to their businesses as well as from eclectic and surprising sources.

Sometimes someone will tell me, "I *never* read *fiction*," as if that's a badge of honor, a rejection of all that is trivial. I'm not impressed. If you haven't read *The Bridges of Madison County*, you'd best not be selling to women. If you haven't read Raymond Chandler or Robert Parker, you have missed important instruction on dialogue. If you haven't studied comic book characters, you have neglected an education contributing to many entrepreneurs' wealth, from Charles Atlas, Jack LaLanne and Arnold Schwarzenegger to Vince McMahon to mine.

If you only read, listen, and watch within narrow parameters, you can only think within narrow parameters, but life problems, business problems and the people you need to influence are diverse. Personally, of course, I read *The Wall Street Journal* and *Forbes*, but I also read *Rolling Stone* and *Mother Earth News* and *Cosmopolitan*. I read business books, but I also read mystery novels, literary fiction, as well as autobiographies and biographies, and each year, I start over with the A's and read the dictionary cover to cover. Economist and bestselling

author Thomas Friedman, who travels extensively, is famous for his fascination for what cab drivers think. He could confine his input to his erudite academic peers' opinions, but it's doubtful he'd be a bestselling author. Two good, daily questions are: What do you know today that you didn't know yesterday? The other: What have you done today to strengthen your intellectual capability? The whole point is to learn and to lift *something*.

Information

Donald Trump reportedly rises every morning at 5:00 A.M. to read a stack of newspapers from New York and from other cities where his company has condominium, hotel, or resort projects.

Most people are constantly trying to do things without getting and using helpful information readily available – online, at the library, in books, through association. Fewer than 50% of the members of any industry or profession even read its own trade journals cover to cover, every month. When people begin projects and come and talk with me about them, it is immediately obvious they've done little or no "homework."

For example, the person starting a marketing campaign for a particular type of product or service to a particular audience who hasn't even bothered to "play prospect," answer competitors' advertisements, talk to their salespersons; hasn't bothered to go where his intended customers go – if boat owners, to a boat show; if chiropractors, to their convention; if truck drivers, to a truck stop's lunch counter. People who show no interest or regard for the history behind the business or

industry they are in or the achievements they seek especially frustrate me.

I can very easily identify intelligent, responsible peak performers vs. dumb, lazy poor performers when they come to me to discuss their business projects: the poor performers only have questions, the high performers have information to give me as precursor to each question. As example, let's assume you are head coach of the Chicago Bears, scheduled to play the Dallas Cowboys this week, and you are fortunate enough to be able to consult with Bill Parcells in advance of the contest. You squander that opportunity and reveal much about yourself, if you sit down with Bill and ask: "How do I beat the Cowboys?" You reveal something very different about yourself, if you present Bill with information about the key match-ups of your players against theirs, notes from studious review of film from the last time the two teams played, the current injury reports, and then ask specific questions about how to beat the Cowboys. If you do the latter, you will get thoughtful, in-depth and valuable answers from Parcells. If you do the former, you'll probably get vague, general, clichéd answers: stop the run, protect against the big play, contain the quarterback. The quality of the answers you get not only depends on the quality of the questions you ask, but of the information on which you built your questions.

Organization

I'm *not* talking about a clean desk, nifty filing system, or possessing a Blackberry that can direct you to the nearest Starbucks anywhere in the world. I once fired one of the most neatly organized fellows I've ever encountered. In his daily appointment book, at 2:00 P.M. every day, neatly written in for six months in advance, was his nap-time.

Time-blocking months ahead including important appointments with yourself is a very good technique. But not for naps.

Peak performers rarely get to work in a neat, sequential, step-by-step manner. It's my experience that the bigger the success, the messier the kitchen it's cooked up in. For that very reason, peak performers work at avoiding waste of time, energy, other resources, and place extraordinary demands on others to do the same. There's just no room for waste. Henry Kissinger noted that there could be no crisis in a particular week because his schedule was already full. I operate in much the same manner; everything is scheduled and timed, my communications with others are by appointments, and a major effort is made to keep me in a productive state as many minutes of every day as possible.

You have to find out what works best for you, and then exercise whatever control you must so you can work best. I work well in a home office – others must get away from their home. I am a “piler” not a “filer” – others are paralyzed by piles around them. This is all subjective, not objective. It's personal. But you can't kid yourself about it either; if you are too easily bounced around from one task to the next, one place to the next, one “fire” to the next, you can't ever get to peak performance. This entire chapter required only 45 minutes to write because, in 15 minutes of preparation, I created the list of factors as an outline and a shorter list of three key objectives to accomplish; because I worked straight through without interruption or distraction.

Organized effort requires both general and specific preparation. General preparation encompasses mental and physical fitness, creating a conducive environment, and so on; specific preparation requires stopping to think before working. People jump onto phone calls, rush to appointments, go into meetings, dash off e-mails with zero specific

preparation, and wonder why they get such poor results. As exceptionally talented as he may be, Tiger Woods does not just hop out of bed thirty minutes before a tournament, gulp down OJ and a Pop-Tart®, hustle out to whatever course he's playing, and grab a club at random and swing, baby, swing. He might get away with it; you won't; and he's smart enough not to try. (John Daly does that, and has pretty much squandered his enormous talent and opportunities.)

Work

It's important to find work that is meaningful to you, that you get good at, and that, the majority of the time, you enjoy doing – because there's no way to achieve peak performance in anything without long hours of real, sleeves rolled up work. I have yet to meet anyone earning a seven figure income year after year or creating and sustaining peak success, prominence, and leadership in any field, business, the arts, sports, politics, without putting in more than forty hours a week more weeks than not, and without developing a strong work ethic and productive work habits. As a matter of fact, most peak performers I know have the line between work and play blurred, and typically prefer their work to activities of escape or leisure. (It's not insignificant that the newest U.S. President's wife, Michelle, has repeatedly, publicly complained about Barack's obsession with his work, long hours, travel, etc. placing a strain on their marriage – and she ain't seen nothing yet!) Obsession with work and peak performance go together.

If you consider that bad news, then, frankly, you're not going to achieve peak performance or success. If you consider it good news, that you can create work for yourself that you find far more interesting and rewarding than going fake-bowling with a "wee" game or trotting off to

vacations every other week, then you likely have the psyche of the peak performer. The evidence of link between preference for work, peak performance, and peak success is presented by the countless numbers of very rich and celebrated leaders of their fields who continue working – hard – years after all financial reasons for doing so are retired; those who return after brief retirements. To name a few risks obscuring the fact that, actually, it's the majority of the leadership minority, but I'll do so anyway: in entertainment, Regis Philbin, Don Rickles (in their 80's, rich, nothing to prove), Seinfeld; in news, Mike Wallace; in sports, Bill Parcells, Joe Gibbs.

These days it's popular and trendy to try selling “the forty minute work-week” or “the lazy way to” – the idea that you can somehow delegate, outsource, and automate your entire life, magically separate accomplishment from effort. But this is not really new. The ad-man turned author Joe Karbo's bestselling book and highly successful full-page ad headlined “The Lazy Man's Way to Riches” is old; it ran decades ago. *The One-Minute Manager* was a bestseller quite a few years ago. People have always been enamored of this idea, which is just one more reason there is such a small percentage of people who are rich. Most such promoted promises are actually bait and switch. When you get past the headlines and hype, you'll find out that there's actually quite a bit of work involved in trying not to work! And if you sneak behind the curtain and observe the promoters of these ideas, you'll discover they are working a lot more than they publicly let on in order to sell their no-work plans. Bluntly, I think it's all green baloney.

Leverage

Nobody achieves peak performance or success just by work. Even if you worked non-stop 24/7, you'd still hit a wall. There are 8,760 hours in a year. If you turned every single one of those hours into \$1,000 net income, you'd make a handy but not all that impressive \$8.7 million before taxes, but, nobody can actually work that much, and precious few can average or exceed \$1,000 an hour for every hour they work. It's not really a sensible plan.

Peak performers seek and create leverage as many different ways as they can, and there's no space here to lay them all out. The obvious includes leverage of knowledge, know-how, proprietary intellectual property, personality, reputation or brand; leverage of the aforementioned automation, delegation, outsourcing; leverage of money and credit. But the "micro" list features hundreds of different opportunities.

The late Joe Cossman, who I did some work with and became friends with late in his life, was a mail-order pioneer and a very astute businessman, who made over a million dollars from scratch with at least 10 different business start-ups, all based on the simple formula of "stealing" the unused leverage in others' inventions and products. Joe discovered that most manufacturers fall into making all their sales through only one to three avenues of distribution, so he would go and secure exclusive marketing rights to a worthy product for the avenues of distribution ignored or not understood by the maker. In each case, he secured these rights without putting a penny up-front, and under very favorable royalty terms, because the manufacturers thought they were giving up nothing of value. (Which, incidentally, loops back to my earlier comments about intellectual curiosity, or, in these cases, the price of lack of such curiosity.) In this manner, Joe took a pest control product

being sold only to the military and through hardware stores and made it a winner in direct-response advertising. Most famously, he brought The Ant Farm® to market as a toy; it was originally sold by its maker to schools. Joe sidestepped all the costs of invention, patent, trademark, product development, making of molds, etc. and profited from leveraging that which already existed. His story is a powerful example of leverage, in this case, of marketing know-how.

Tolerance For Pain

This is an “x-factor” not customarily discussed in how-to-succeed literature, because it is considered discouraging or negative. It is what I call a never spoken truth. The super-successful develop very high tolerance for the stress of responsibility, the pressure of constant appearance of and management of problems, the coordination of the complex, the scars of conflict, and the disappointment and embarrassment of failure. They are willing to be Atlas with the entire world on their shoulders. Some even, perhaps perversely, enjoy it. There may be a fine and often crossed line between masochism and peak performance – in sports, in business, and elsewhere.

I mention this here in passing only to point out that any idea of somehow arriving at a place of peak performance, exceptional success, high authority, and substantial wealth without being bloodied, bruised, scarred, and challenged every step of the way and every day you are there, not just en-route, is fantasy. Mental toughness matters. And I would add that immunity to criticism – the secret to a strong and healthy self-image (which governs the limits of individual achievement), the requirement for essential risk, and the key emotional ingredient of resilience – is absolutely critical. Nothing is more crippling than hyper-

sensitivity to others' opinions and a need for others' approval; there is nothing more empowering than self-approval.

Beneficial Association

Last on my list, the development of “circles” around you, that you can rely on for advice and counsel without interfering agenda, that you can get condensed information and ideas from, and that you can leverage, as a network, informally and formally. I discuss this at greater length in one of my books, *No B.S. Guide To Ruthless Management of People and Profits*, so I won't duplicate that effort here. **Suffice to say, there are two important assets every peak performer possesses:** one, a very short list of trusted advisors, friends, and allies he or she can call on and rely on; two, a very, very, very big and diverse Rolodex of contacts he or she can leverage, for almost any purpose, as sources of or connections to anything he or she needs. Over time some people have these things to whatever degree they occur organically, essentially, accidentally, and randomly. Peak performers strategically and deliberately develop them.

I'd be remiss if I omitted a brief commercial message. I am, above all else, a salesman with compulsion to sell when appropriate, and here it is definitely appropriate to mention the incredible opportunity afforded participants in our Glazer-Kennedy Insider's Circle PEAK PERFORMERS coaching and mastermind group, uniting entrepreneurs from all over the world with exceptional marketing acumen and a dedication to peak performance in an alliance, assisting each other with their businesses and their personal development at periodic group meetings facilitated by Bill Glazer and Lee Milteer. Also, to mention the networking and mastermind-association opportunities provided at

the local level, in well over 100 cities throughout the U.S. and Canada, with our local chapters, facilitated by our independent business advisors. Information about both can be found at DanKennedy.com.

And there you have it, my short list of characteristics of peak performers. What should be evident is that I do not view peak performance as a state you arrive at, a competence you achieve, or a collection of skills and habits you develop, but as something you do.

To me, success is a verb.

DAN S. KENNEDY is a multi-millionaire serial entrepreneur, highly sought after and incredibly expensive business and direct marketing consultant and direct-response copywriter. He is the author of 13 business books and a popular speaker. Information about his books can be found at www.NoB-SBooks.com. He is also a frequently published columnist, commenting on business and politics, at www.BusinessAndMedia.org. For Glazer-Kennedy Insider's Circle, Dan writes and edits three monthly newsletters, contributes to online media, and speaks at several major members' conferences per year. Further information can be found at www.DanKennedy.com.

Dan occasionally accepts interesting speaking engagements and new consulting or copywriting projects and clients. To contact the author directly, fax 602-269-3113 or write c/o Kennedy Inner Circle, Inc., 5818 N. 7th Street #103, Phoenix, Arizona 85014. (Please do not e-mail any of the websites. Mr. Kennedy does not receive, use, or respond to e-mail.)

You can access "The Most Incredible FREE Gift Ever" containing \$613.91 of Pure Money-Making Information courtesy of Dan Kennedy and Bill Glazer can be found later in this book.

The “3” Ways I Know To MAXIMIZE Peak Performance

BILL GLAZER

I've been an entrepreneur all of my life. When I was a kid I had a small business that repaired bicycles. During the summers while in college I owned a “Sno-Cone” stand in a strip shopping center to make enough spending money to hold me over for the entire year while I attended school.

Later, I had other fast food businesses in several malls and for over thirty years I owned and operated the family menswear business that my father began. I grew that business to be one of the top ten most successful menswear stores in the United States and the most successful in Maryland until I exited retail in 2006.

Now, I'm best known as a marketing strategist and the guy who runs the exploding Glazer-Kennedy Insider's Circle™ (GKIC) business. In case you're not familiar with GKIC, it's **“THE PLACE Where Entrepreneurs Seeking Fast and Dramatic Growth, Greater Control, Independence, and Security Come Together.”**

I referred to the GKIC business as “exploding” because we have experienced an 850% growth within the five years that Dan Kennedy and I have joined forces to build our iNformation mMarketing company, which consisting of three monthly newsletters, multiple coaching pro-

grams, an extensive catalogue of money-making resources (available at glazer-kennedywebstore.com), two large national events, and over 100 GKIC chapters throughout North America and Canada.

I find that some of the most interesting questions that I am asked by GKIC members are NOT marketing related. In fact, I know Dan Kennedy also gets many similar questions. The most common non-marketing related question goes something like this:

“How do you get so much accomplished...all of the time?”

It's a fair question, and the reality of it is, I have three 'related' answers.

#1: WORK HARD-SMART!

The first thing that I do to get so much done is I work hard-smart! What does it mean to work hard-smart? Let me explain. I'm not ashamed to admit it; I actually work very hard and put many hours into my businesses. In fact, I find it quite interesting when people brag to me how little they work. These are the same people who are either not successful, will never reach a higher level of success, or are just plain lucky.

While I will admit that I attribute some of my success to luck, I have never counted on it and I certainly would never wait for it to happen. Instead, I put in the time and effort necessary to accomplish my objectives.

Putting in a 40, 50, or 60-hour work-week isn't the answer. It's making sure you use those hours effectively. Here's a little exercise for you to do in order to help you determine how to work hard-smart.

First, determine how much your time is worth? Are you a twenty dollar an hour person or a two thousand dollar an hour person? Most likely, you are somewhere in between.

Next, for an entire week, log all of your activities and put beside each one how long it took you to accomplish it. This is sometimes not easy to do, especially when you multi-task, but do the best job you can in approximating your time for each task.

Now, go back to each task and multiply what your time is worth by the amount of time it took you to accomplish it. I guess you've figured out where I'm going with this. Once you see how much it's costing you to accomplish each task, determine if it is the best use of your time or are you better off delegating or hiring someone else to accomplish the task so you can only spend your time doing those things where you are being compensated for what your time is worth.

That's why I would never cut my own grass or wash one of my cars. I can easily hire someone who is willing to work for much less than me to do those tasks. If I really enjoyed cutting grass as a hobby or found it therapeutic, well that's a different story. But, I don't...so I would never do it. The same holds true for tasks in my business. I try to spend as much of my time doing those tasks that can pay me how much my time is worth. In my company, it's primarily overseeing the marketing and creating online and offline copy that generates sales. This is what I mean when I refer to WORK HARD-SMART – not just working hard.

#2: SYSTEMATIZE

The next thing I do to get so much done is to Systematize whenever I can. After all, by definition, a System is a group of activities that when working together in the correct sequence, accomplishes an objective.

The funny thing is that you, and every business for that matter, have Systems. The problem is that most of them are either lousy or not thought out carefully. They just kind of happened. I remember when I was working in the family menswear stores my father implemented a System to stamp every receipt "paid." Years later, our cashiers had a point of sale computer system and a receipt could only be generated after it was paid, but we still stamped each receipt until one day a manager asked me why we were still doing it and I said, "Duh!" My manager was right; this was a System that was put into place that out-lived its usefulness. Unfortunately, most businesses have Systems like these.

On the other hand, when Systems are properly utilized, they provide a massive amount of leverage. For example, I have been teaching entrepreneurs for years that they need a System to reactivate Lost Customers as they are some of the easiest Customers to get to return to a business.

At my menswear stores, we would place our customers who did not return within six months into a 4-Step Customer Reactivation Marketing Campaign consisting of three oversized postcards sent out two weeks apart and afterwards an outbound phone call was made. This System would routinely result in over 10% of our lost customers to return to our stores.

Another example of a System is the fulfillment of our deliverables at GKIC. Each month Dan Kennedy and I have a System to write portions of our newsletters and record our CD interviews. Once our parts are completed they are turned over to our marketing manager to facilitate them getting printed, duplicated, and then mailed. This is a System that allows everyone to achieve maximum efficiency.

The best part about these and all other Systems is that once they are created and perfected, they allow for peak performance of everyone involved.

#3: GETTING THINGS DONE THROUGH OTHERS

People are often curious about my management style. I tell them that it is very simple. My definition of management is getting things done through others. The truth is that you cannot ever grow your business or income without the help of others.

I don't care if you never have an employee; you still need to get things done through others. You might need to outsource or solicit the help of co-workers, but in order to grow and maximize your peak performance you've got to eventually delegate some of your tasks.

While more and more people seem to be going the route of virtual assistants these days, I guess I'm still old-school; I like to have employees around me. This is not to say that we don't outsource a lot of tasks such as printing and fulfillment, but as of the writing of this chapter, Glazer-Kennedy Insider's Circle™ and its affiliate companies employ approximately thirty employees.

Obviously we could never have enjoyed our growth without them. You can believe me when I tell you that I am not running a government agency at GKIC, where people are non-productive and oftentimes unnecessary. At GKIC you are busy from the beginning of the day to the end of the day or you are gone.

I am also a big believer in "delegating with accountability." By that, I mean that I delegate as much as I can to the appropriate person, but everything I delegate is done using a system that I learned from my management mentor and friend, Vince Zirpoli, who calls it SMART delegation. It's an acronym for:

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Attainable

R = Relevant

T = Time Bound

I never delegate anything that does not meet the above criteria, and as you can see there is a specific agreed-upon deadline as to when it will be accomplished.

PUTTING ALL THE PIECES TOGETHER

It should be obvious to you by now that each of "The 3 Ways I Know To Maximize Peak Performance" really works best when they all work together rather than separately. In fact, I believe it is really impossible not to have them working at the same time.

Think about it. You really need to figure out what you should be doing that is the best use of your time and then delegate to others what you

should NOT be doing. Also, whether you or others are doing the task, it is best for everyone to Systematize as much as you can so the task can be created one time (and hopefully one time only) and repeated over and over again.

To accomplish this, it does take some hard work, but as you read at the beginning of this chapter, it is work that is hard-smart – my favorite kind of work!

BILL GLAZER is one of the most celebrated marketing strategists in the world. He is best known for his OUTRAGEOUSLY EFFECTIVE direct-response advertising and direct mail. In fact, in 2002, he won the prestigious RAC Award. This honor is equivalent in advertising as the Oscars are to movies and the Emmys to television. Bill teamed up with Marketing Guru Dan Kennedy in 2004 and they now provide marketing and business building advice to over 200,000 members and subscribers worldwide.

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Cultivating an Abundant Mentality

STEVE CLARK

What is your definition of abundance? Take out a sheet of paper and write down the answer to the question – what is abundance?

Is your definition about having, acquiring, and accumulating?

When I ask workshop participants to do this the overwhelming response has been about having, acquiring, and accumulating.

Let me kind of turn things upside down by giving you a different definition of abundance. Abundance is not about accumulating, acquiring, or having but instead it is about developing a spiritual sense of the limitlessness of it all.

Abundance is not about having but about being. It is about becoming. It is not a place or a destination; it is a process and a journey.

Abundance is simply a state. If it is not a place or destination that we go to; if it is a spiritual sense of the limitlessness of it all, then all we have to do is simply train our minds how to tune into it. It already exists. Abundance exists in the universe. It has always existed and will always

exist. It may change and show itself in different tangible forms, but it has and will always exist.

This is what Einstein taught us. Everything that is created, everything that we have right now, everything that currently exists has always existed and will always exist. Matter can neither be created nor destroyed. Everything exists simultaneously. All we have to do is learn to tune into it.

Why is it then that in spite of the abundance in the universe most people struggle and experience lack in their lifestyle, relationships, physical health, mental and emotional development, and income and wealth accumulation?

The problems we experience, the lifestyle we lead, the quality of our relationships and our physical health – everything that happens to us – is because of our mental conditioning and subsequent behavior. Most of us have been negatively conditioned since childhood and told by well-meaning adult authority figures and role models what we cannot do and what our limitations are.

Psychologists tell us that as much as seventy-seven percent of all the mental messages and images that we have about ourselves are negative, counterproductive, and self-defeating. As a result of these programs and images, we erect mental barriers that become self-fulfilling prophecies that prevent us from being blessed and experiencing abundance. We sabotage ourselves by creating our own walls and our own barriers. Stephen Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, says it this way, “We do not see life as it is, we say life as we are.” Our life experience is a reflection of what’s inside us.

For thirty years I have made a habit of observing people and listening to their language. What people say when they open their mouth reveals a lot. It reveals who they are, what their programming is, what behaviors they will or will not engage in, and ultimately it foretells their future. People literally talk themselves into the future.

Here are some examples of negative, counterproductive, and self-defeating messages that people say to themselves. Are you guilty of saying any of these?

Buyers aren't spending money
The economy is really slow
I can't remember names
I can't seem to get organized
I can't seem to lose weight
I can't seem to find time to exercise
Nobody in my family has ever become rich
I can't seem to get ahead
People are really rude
I don't have time to read and study
I can't afford it
Nobody is buying
I never have enough time
I just don't have the patience for that
Another blue Monday
That really makes me mad

When you say or think any of these or any other thoughts you are sending a message to the subconscious that says make that come true.

Recently, I was conducting a seminar when one of the participants approached me at the break and said, “I just seem to be having so much trouble. I’m struggling so much.” I said to him, “Yes, and you’re going to continue to struggle until you change that language because that language, that conscious thought, directs the subconscious to go to work and transform that thought into a physical reality. It says to the subconscious, got it? Got that picture? Let’s go to work to make that one come true. The captain of the ship, the conscious mind, says I struggle. The guy down in the engine room, the subconscious, says okay let’s make it happen. If you want to change your life experience then change your language, change your thoughts and you’ll change your beliefs. Sow a thought, reap an action. Sow an action, reap a habit. Sow a habit and reap a destiny. It all starts with the thought process. Thought processes create habits that produce results.”

Most psychologists would agree that less than 5% of our daily behavior is conscious and more than 95% of our daily behavior is automatic and is controlled by the subconscious. For example, we drive from home to work without ever remembering going through traffic lights or having to think about the route because we have done it so many times. Same thing with driving a manual transmission vehicle. Do you remember when you first learned to drive a manual transmission? It was like which foot goes where. Now, after thousands of hours of practice and mental conditioning, you can drive, eat a cheeseburger, listen to the radio, and talk on the cell phone, and shift gears, all at the same time without ever thinking about it. It’s a conditioned response that is controlled by the subconscious, which governs our whole behavioral process.

What is the difference between the conscious and the subconscious? The conscious mind plants thoughts and ideas into the subconscious.

It is a mental thermostat that each of us has the ability and responsibility to set wherever we choose.

The subconscious accepts the messages from the conscious at face value. It does not evaluate those messages for accuracy and reality. It does not distinguish between right and wrong or moral and immoral, truth and fiction. It doesn't even question the validity of messages it receives. It simply does what it is told.

If we are going to experience abundance we must learn new ways of thinking and discipline our mind to focus on what is possible instead of what is not possible. We must learn to focus on what we want not what we don't want.

This transformation starts with a decision to focus on abundance and possibilities instead of scarcity and lack. Once we make this decision we must discipline our mind to stay focused and protect ourselves and our thoughts from those sources that would otherwise contaminate and poison us. That means turning off the television and minimizing our exposure to media sources that constantly promote doom and gloom. It may mean eliminating some personal and professional relationships that are toxic and counterproductive to our well-being. It may mean changing jobs. And in some instances it may mean minimizing contact with family members. In extreme cases it may mean getting rid of a spouse.

The scriptures address this very well. "Be not conformed to this world but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is acceptable and perfect and good in the will of God." Romans 12:2. The key word there being transformed. We are talking about a mental transformation. How long does it take to make a mental

transformation? About as long as it takes to learn not to touch a hot stove.

That transformation can happen in an instant. Whatever we are dealing with, whatever issue we have, we can literally be transformed in an instant. But before this can happen we must make a conscious decision to, in fact, seek mental transformation.

Take inventory of your current belief system. What does your current belief system look like? Do you see and speak of possibilities or do you see and speak only of lack, problems, and obstacles? Get real with yourself. This may be painful because the truth often hurts. Pay attention to your language. What are you saying when you open your mouth? What do you say when you talk to yourself?

I would like you to stop reading and do an exercise. Take out a sheet of paper and write down ten things that you are thankful for. Because it is impossible for the human mind to have two simultaneous thoughts, you cannot do this exercise and have scarcity thinking at the same time. Look at your list. How are you feeling at this moment? What do you think the outcome would be if you did this exercise during the first hour of each day? Do you think you might start each day with positive expectations? What do you think the outcome would be if you did this every day for a week, a month, a year? I can tell you from experience that it would change your life like it changed mine. If you doubt this let me give you some quotes that helped convince me of this.

“Who so ever shall say unto this mountain be thou removed and cast into the sea and shall have no doubt in his heart but shall believe that those things which he sayeth shall come to pass he shall have what he sayeth,” Mark 11:24. Here’s another one, Matthew 7:7, “Ask and it will

be given unto you, seek and you will find. Knock and the door will be opened unto you.” Also Job 22:28, “Thou shall decree a thing and it shall be established unto you.”

Say what it is you want, not what you don't want. Focus on what you want not what you don't want. Don't worry about all the other stuff. Stuff happens – it's always going to happen. Decide what it is that you want, create a written plan to obtain it, keep your eye on the mark, and execute and implement the plan with a positive expectancy that it will happen. If you do this you will increase your chances of experiencing abundance and a life of your dreams.

STEVE CLARK is North America's number one sales coach. He is the founder and CEO of New School Selling, an international business development and marketing consulting firm. Since 1980, he has sold pest control services, pots and pans, security systems, vitamins, laundry detergent, life and health insurance, annuities, mutual funds, stocks and bonds and school service products. He is a risk taker and an entrepreneur. In 1996, Steve was making \$53,000 per year as a salesperson and he had over \$40,000 of credit card debt. Taking out a second mortgage on his house and borrowing \$10,000 from his mother, he set out into the world of sales and marketing consulting with zero clients, zero income, a wife and two daughters aged 10 and 13. It was a gutsy leap of faith that has paid big dividends! Today he earns more in a month than he used to earn in a year and the thing he loves to do more than anything else is to teach other sales executives how to do the same. In addition to his duties as a CEO, he is a US Coast Guard captain and runs a fishing charter business out of Navarre, Florida where many nights you'll find him 90 miles offshore hauling in yellow fin tuna.