

Self Improvement: the Foundation of Success

Many people have dreams, ambitions, or goals but do not know how to go about achieving them.

They may have thought about self improvement and what their ideal life would consist of, but have no idea how to even begin to make the plans and take the actions required to make this a reality.

How can one tell if a person is willing to work on self improvement? Some people have merely a vague idea about how to begin "improving". These are the folks who believe that if only they had a better job, or met the love of their life, or had been given better opportunities, and so on, everything would be fine and they would be happy.

They believe that their happiness or lack of it is decided by external factors; thus their thoughts and actions are deemed to be of little consequence. Some believe that if only they had more money they could have whatever they want and be on their way to self improvement. I call these people "materialist self improvers."

Sadly, most people have spent little time thinking about what they actually want from life. Most of us just trudge through our daily routines and work, without thinking of the possibilities for change. Others briefly consider changes, but do not believe there is anything they can do to create their vague version of utopia#apart from buying more lottery tickets.

People who fail to reflect on these matters often do not know what they actually want from their lives, and may even have little idea what would genuinely make them happy. They seem to just drift from day to day, week to week, and year to year, doing little more than just getting by.

They may have what they believe to be a secure job and earn enough to live a relatively comfortable life. They seem happy enough and have no great ambition to achieve anything more from life. But there is more, much more. How important is self improvement?

Throughout our lives we are constantly growing and developing. Circumstances make us grow and develop, even if we fail to make the conscious decision to do so. Before a certain age, we learn through formal education institutions and we continue to learn through our experiences for the rest of our lives. We all go through general self improvement just in dealing with life's ups and downs.

Today's world moves at a much faster pace than at any time in history. For anyone living in modern society there are more opportunities to structure our lives than ever. But that can also create confusion and hesitation.

There is also greater competition today, and ever-changing technology means that there are few "jobs for life" anymore. It is now normal not only to change jobs frequently throughout our working lives, but even to change careers or industries entirely. Because the modern workplace is so competitive, people who are ambitious and hungry for success know they need to learn new skills and knowledge to keep ahead of colleagues. To attain this, they must add self improvement to the list of tasks.

I like to call these people "reflective actors" meaning that they not only reflect on their desires, but they choose to act on them. They are the people that are most likely to progress within their chosen field, and will be most readily employable in different organizations or industries.

An individual's commitment to self improvement and personal growth may well be the deciding factor in how his or her future plays out. We will be covering this topic in several upcoming articles, and hope to offer guidance to those who are taking the first steps toward self-improvement.