

How to Live Your Best Life



*The Essential Guide For Creating
And Achieving Your Life List*

by Marelisa Fábrega



How to Live Your Best Life – The Essential Guide for Creating and Achieving Your Life List

By Marelisa Fábrega
Abundance Blog at Marelisa Online

© Copyright 2011 – 2012 by “Marelisa Online” All Worldwide Rights Reserved

Disclaimer: I have endeavored to make sure that the information contained herein is accurate, but I make no guarantees—real or implied--as to the results you'll achieve by applying the tips, methods and techniques presented in this eBook. If advice regarding legal, accounting or related matters is needed, the services of a fully qualified professional should be sought. You should be aware of any laws that govern business transactions or other business practices in your country or state. If you choose to apply the advice contained in this eBook you do so at your own risk. But, of course, you already know all of this.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

How to Read This eBook

Your Ten Life Areas

How This eBook is Organized

Your Life List Journal

Part I: Set the Stage

Chapter One: Climb Into the Driver's Seat

Take the Role of Creator

Exercise 1: Story of A Creator

Exercise 2: The Language of A Creator

Exercise 3: Take Inventory of Your Resources

Exercise 4: The Wise Choice Process

Exercise 5: Expand Your Circle of Influence

The Importance of Deciding What You Want

Chapter Two: Give Focus and Purpose To Your Life

Exercise 6: Your Intention for Creating a Life List

Part II: Create Your Life List

Chapter Three: Creating Your "Master Dream List"

How to Get Out of the Identity Trap

Exercise 7: Dreams Brewing

Exercise 8: Chip Away at Anything that Doesn't Belong

Exercise 9: Create a Collage for Each of Your Ten Life Areas

Exercise 10: Create a Ten-Year Vision

Exercise 11: Your Obituary

Chapter Four: Life List Guidelines and Litmus Test

Guidelines for Your Life List

Litmus Test

Exercise 12: Create Your Life List

Sample Life List

Having Trouble Getting In Touch With What You Want?

Exercise 13: Make Your Life List Come Alive

Part III: Turn Your Dreams Into Goals

Chapter Five: How to Prioritize Your Life List

Do This Or Die

Paired Comparison

Grid Analysis

Exercise 14: Choose a Goal to Start Working On

Chapter Six: Set Specific, Measurable, Time-Bound Goals

Goals Should Be Specific

Your Goals Have to Be Measurable

Setting a Deadline is Vital for Goal Setting

Additional Considerations for Setting Your Goals

Exercise 15: Set a Specific, Measurable, Time-Bound Goal

Chapter Seven: Have Many Reasons “Why”

Ten Questions to Help You Generate a List of “Why’s”

Exercise 16: Your Reasons “Why”

Chapter Eight: Commit to Your Goals

Create a Commitment Contract

Have Something at Stake

Put Your Bacon On the Line

Exercise 17: Your Commitment Contract

Exercise 18: What’s at Stake?

Part IV: Winning the Mind Game - Your Mental Blueprint

Chapter Nine: Set Empowering Beliefs

Examine Your Beliefs

Case Study: Rich Dad, Poor Dad

Cultivate a Success Mindset – The Psychology of Success

How To Change Your Beliefs

Exercise 19: What Do You Need to Believe?

Chapter Ten: Boost Your Self-Image

Your Mental Blueprint

The Snap-Back Effect

Modify Your Self-image and Achieve Your Goals

Chained Elephant Syndrome

How to Change Your Self-Image

Exercise 20: I AM . . .

Chapter Eleven: Rigorously Exclude Your Fears

The Four Main Fears

Just Keep Moving

Exercise 21: Make a List of Your Fears

Part V: Creating An Action Plan – Your Roadmap

Chapter Twelve: The Paint by Number Approach

Kit for Training For a Marathon

Kit for Weight Loss

Kit for Writing a Novel

Steven Spielberg – Model Those Who Are Successful

Exercise 22: Create a Paint By Number Approach For Your Goal

Chapter Thirteen: Always Ask “How”

Practice the Rule of Five

How Bill Clinton Got Control of His Life

Exercise 23: Identify Five “How’s”

Chapter Fourteen: Your Reticular Activating System

Follow Your Nose and You’ll Achieve Your Goals

How Achieving Your Goals is Like Rock Climbing

How to Uncover Your Dharma or the Next Right Action

Exercise 24: Discover Your Dharma

Part VI: Doing What Needs To Be Done

Chapter Fifteen: Take Right Action

The Law of Cause and Effect

Act in the Way Most Conducive to Achieving Your Goals

Apply the PDCA Model

Exercise 25: Your Activity Log

Chapter Sixteen: Make Time Your Ally

Put In the Big Rocks First

Plan Your Day The Night Before

How to Create Your Daily To-Do List

Create a “Stop Doing” List

Create Habits That Will Allow You to Reach Your Goals

Get Organized

Your Weekly Review

The One-Hour-A-Day Formula

Chapter Seventeen: Create Habits to Keep You Going

Focus on Changing or Creating One Habit at a Time

Know Why You're Doing It

Make It Small and Simple

Establish a Specific Time to Carry Out Your New Habit

Conduct a 30-day Trial

Replace a Bad Habit With Something Else

Set Up Your Environment to Help You

Chart Your Progress

Do It With Others

Reward Yourself

Exercise 26: Build a List of Habits to Adopt or Drop

Chapter Eighteen: Measure & Track Your Progress

Track Your Goals With Joe's Goals

Good Old Fashioned Journal or Log Book

Choose a Tracking System that Makes Sense to You

Exercise 27: Decide How You're Going to Track Your Goal

Part VII: Be Unstoppable – Keep Your Momentum

Chapter Nineteen: Staying Motivated

Recognize Your Progress

Give Yourself Constant Rewards

Create a Friendly Competition

Don't Allow Yourself to Skip Two Days in a Row

Break Your Goals Down Into Smaller Chunks

Look at Your Goals Often and Use the Power of Visualization

Post Visual Reminders Where You'll See Them Constantly

The Three Minute Power Pause

Create a Goals Bracelet

Hire a Professional

Accept that Delays and Setbacks Are Part of the Process

Exercise 28: Your Motivation Plan

Chapter Twenty: Knocking Down Obstacles

Hannibal Barca – Find a Way or Make One

Case Study: The Blair Witch Project

Seven Strategies for Overcoming Obstacles

Exercise 29: Plan How to Overcome Obstacles

Chapter Twenty-One: The Power of Perseverance

“Not Dead, Can’t Quit”

Old Hawk’s Lessons on Perseverance

An Iron Will

Part VIII: What Are You Waiting For? Get Going

Chapter Twenty-Two: Keep a Journal of Your Journey

Exercise 30: List of Things You’ve Done

Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

The best way to get the most out of life is to look upon it as a magnificent adventure. Imagine being able to say at the end of your life's journey:

"Wow, what a ride!" And what better way to have a fulfilling, meaningful, adventurous life than by creating a life list, and taking the necessary steps to cross off each item on your list?

When most people think of a life list, they think of things such as the following:

- "Climb the Eiffel Tower"
- "Go to Carnival at Rio de Janeiro"
- "Swim with Sharks"
- "Go To the Super Bowl"
- "See the Great Wall of China"

You should definitely include travel on your life list---if seeing the world, meeting new people, and experiencing different cultures is something that interests you. In addition, you should include all of the different adventures you would like to go on. However, you should also take the time to decide what you want to accomplish in each area of your life. This includes areas such as the following:

- **Work.** Starting a profitable, location-independent business doing what you love; finding work that gives you a sense of fulfillment; being among the best in the world in your field.
- **Family:** Finding and marrying the love of your life; having a healthy, happy child; spending lots of quality time with the most important people in your life.
- **Health:** Having the energy and strength to do everything you want; to look and feel fit; to age well.

"Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming – 'WOW – What a Ride!'"

~ Hunter S. Thompson

"Live as well as you dare."

~ Sydney Smith

"The only question in life is whether or not you are going to answer a hearty 'YES!' to your adventure."

~Joseph Campbell


"Never forget that life can only be nobly inspired and rightly lived if you take it bravely and gallantly, as a splendid adventure in which you are setting out into an unknown country, to face many a danger, to meet many a joy, to find many a comrade, to win and lose many a battle."

~ Annie Besant

- **Contributions:** Spending a year abroad with the Peace Corps; volunteering at a homeless shelter; mentoring a disadvantaged youth.
- **Finances:** Having a million dollar investment portfolio; having multiple sources of passive income; having enough money to be able to finance your life goals.
- **Personal Development:** Having the ability to hit the "pause button" and choosing your attitude in any situation; learning to forgive; having a happiness project.

Creating and achieving your life list is about deciding what you really want—which means setting goals—, as well as planning, budgeting, and then taking the necessary steps to accomplish your goals. The last part, taking action, includes making sure that you take the most direct route toward achieving your goals, as well as incorporating habits and routines into your daily life which will help you to gradually mold your life into a work of art that is uniquely yours.

Here's my definition of a **life list**:



A life list is a set of goals that you set for yourself covering all the different areas of your life. It's meant to ensure that you decide what you want to do and have in life, and who you want to be, and that you take the necessary action to accomplish these things.

Gary Ryan Blair, also known as “The Goals Guy”, has the following to say about goal setting: “Achievements and accomplishments do not happen accidentally. They are the result of clearly defined goals acted upon until completion. Goals determine what you will or will not become or accomplish.” Setting goals is the first step toward moving yourself from where you are to where you want to be.

If you don't set life goals for yourself, then others will set them for you. If you don't set financial goals, retailers and marketers will decide for you how you're going to spend your money. If you don't have career goals, your employer will decide how many hours you put in, and what job you're holding ten years from now. If you don't have contribution goals, fund-raisers will decide which causes you contribute to. And on and on.


In his book, “The Magic Lamp”, Keith Ellis refers to a study conducted in 1921 by Dr. Lewis Terman of Stanford University involving over 1,500 gifted children. The objective of the study was to better understand the relationship between intelligence and achievement. What he discovered was extraordinary: IQ is not the most important ingredient for success. Instead, the three factors which Terman found were far more important for success than sheer intelligence were self-confidence, perseverance, and a tendency to set goals.

There are two important questions which the succulent Susan Kennedy—better known as SARK—asks in her book “Make Your Creative Dreams Real”. The questions are the following:

1. How much of your time is spent living your dream?
2. When will you let yourself begin living your dream?

The objective of this eBook is to help you to begin right away to find ways in which to maximize the amount of time, money, and energy that you spend living your dream. That is, to show you how to organize your life around your dreams, instead of trying to fit your dreams into the nooks and crannies of your chaotic life.

Poet Gabrielle Bouliane gave a brilliant performance at the Austin Poetry Slam after being told by her doctor that she was dying of cancer. She passed away shortly after giving said performance. Here’s part of what she said:



“What are you waiting for? Why aren’t you being everything that you can be right now? Why haven’t you asked that crush you have out on a date? Or applied for your motorcycle license? Or told your family you’re going back to school to become the one career you’ve always wanted to become, whether it’s sensible or not?

I know you’ve heard it a thousand times: ‘You only get one life’. Let me rephrase that in a way that will make more sense: ‘You’re going to die, sometime, somehow.’ The only difference between you and me is that I may have an idea of when and how . . . Do not wait . . . Start today and change your life to the best it can be.”

In his book “Your Life as Art”, Robert Fritz argues that you can create your life in the same way an artist creates a work of art. Conceive of the life that you want like an artist conceives of a painting or a musical composition. Then take action to create this life, just like an artist takes action to create the painting or the piece of music. Lastly, inhabit the life that you want to create, as the artist may hang his painting on the wall in order to experience it, or play the music he has composed.

HOW TO READ THIS EBOOK

Mortimer J. Adler explains in “How to Read a Book” that while reading a book, you should be holding a conversation with the author, mentally asking questions, making comments, and so on. Further down in this introduction you’ll be asked to start a Life Journal. As you read this eBook, write down any questions and comments you might have in your Life Journal. You should also do the following:

- Copy down key sentences.
- Make a note of things you want to come back to.
- If you disagree with something you read, write it down along with an explanation of why you disagree; propose your own theory of what works.
- Write down key words.
- Write short summaries of what you’ve just read.
- Create mind maps.
- Is there a topic which you feel you really need to work on? Make a note that you would like to find out more about that topic.

In addition to reading this eBook actively, you need to make sure that you complete all of the exercises that it contains. You can read this eBook just for the information that it contains, but that’s not going to help you achieve your life list. The only way in which this eBook is really going to help you live your best life is if you complete the exercises it contains.

In the book “8 Proven Secrets to Smart Success”, Peggy McColl presents the following formula:

“When you hear that I have died, and you will, remember your best revenge is to live well, take risks, save up money and chase your perfect happiness. Beat the system and learn to make your art really support you, craft into something your audience can’t live without. Then make the world an even slightly better place — stop throwing your cigarettes on the ground, vote in the next election, graffiti your life on the eyes of the hungry.

Then just do me one last favor. Please. Love something. Anything. Start with yourself, but find passion in everything, from an apple pie to a novel, make a family, get a degree, walk whatever path is yours with your chin up and feet planted firmly. Have the best stories to tell in the old folk’s home, about lifelong friendships and epic love affairs, about the time you lost everything and yet found yourself happier than when you began . . .”

~ Gabrielle Bouliane

Knowledge + Understanding = Wisdom
Wisdom + Application = Transformation

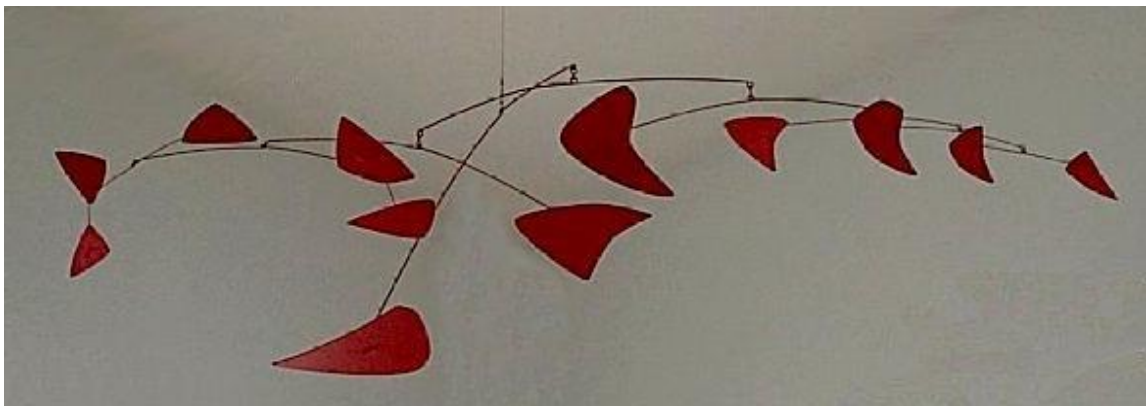
Don't just read this eBook with the purpose of understanding what it has to say, and thereby acquiring wisdom. Instead, apply the wisdom that you acquire so that you can transform your life.

YOUR TEN LIFE AREAS

Life is a dynamic, ever changing balancing act that involves taking a look at the different areas of your life and evaluating the relative importance of each area for you. To get a broad, balanced coverage of all important areas in your life, you should divide your life into categories, or life areas, and ask yourself what you want to achieve in each one. In addition, keep in mind that at different stages of your life, different categories may take front and center stage.

There are ten life areas which I suggest that you use for your life list. These ten life areas are the following:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Finances | 6. Dwelling |
| 2. Learning/Personal Development | 7. Spirituality |
| 3. Vocation/Career | 8. Fitness/Health |
| 4. Love/Family | 9. Travel/Adventure/Fun |
| 5. Social/Community | 10. Possessions |



Calder Red Mobile

Like the Calder Mobile in the previous page, you need to find the proper balance between your life areas. Give each life area the time, energy, and attention that you've decided it requires. Notice in the image that not all the elements are the same size, and that they're not equidistant from the center. Likewise, some life areas may be more important to you than others.

To quote Alexander Calder:

"Each element able to move, to stir, to oscillate, to come and go in its relationships with the other elements in its universe."

HOW THIS EBOOK IS ORGANIZED

This eBook is divided into the following eight parts:

Part I:	Set the Stage You're going to begin by taking the preparatory steps that are going to allow you to design, and then start creating, your best life.
Part II:	Create Your Life List You'll be cured once and for all of the dreaded "but-I'm-not-really-sure-what-I-want" syndrome. By the end of Part II all of your dreams will be set down on paper.
Part III:	Turn Your Dreams Into Goals To paraphrase Henry David Thoreau, you first build your castles in the air, and then you lay a foundation under them. That's exactly what you'll be doing in Part III.
Part IV:	Winning the Mind Game – Your Mental Blueprint When we don't achieve what we want in life, it's often due to our own inner resistance; in this part you'll be releasing that resistance so that you can go after what you want unencumbered.
Part V:	Creating an Action Plan – Your Roadmap Once you know where you want to go, you have to create a roadmap for getting there.
Part VI:	Doing What Needs to Be Done You'll never get what you want without taking action. In this part you'll discover how to take efficient action, so that you can achieve the things you want with the least amount of effort.
Part VII:	Be Unstoppable – Keep Your Momentum Living your best life isn't just about getting started. You have to keep going, until you reach your intended destination.
Part VIII:	What Are You Waiting For? Get Going This part will light a fire under the seat of your pants so that you get to it.

YOUR LIFE LIST JOURNAL



Bungee photo courtesy of [Strocchi](#).

A life list is not something that you create in one sitting and then stick in a drawer and forget about it. You should look at your life list each and every day and make it an integral part of creating your to-do list for each day.

Decide right now what materials you're going to use to create your life list. I suggest that you get a Moleskine or some other sturdy notebook and create a "Life List Journal".

You'll be including lots of things in your journal, such as writing down your short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals, breaking your goals down into concrete action steps, and adding quotes, photographs, images, ideas, and so on. Complete the exercises in this eBook in your journal.

Please stop and put together your Life List Journal right now. As Russian novelist Vladimir Nabokov once said: "The pages are still blank, but there is a miraculous feeling of the words being there, written in invisible ink and clamoring to become visible."

PART I: SET THE STAGE

- **Chapter One:** Climb Into the Driver's Seat
- **Chapter Two:** Give Focus and Purpose to Your Life

CHAPTER ONE: CLIMB INTO THE DRIVER'S SEAT

“Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show.”

~ David Copperfield

“Destiny is not a matter of chance, it is a matter of choice; it is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved.”

~ William J. Bryan

“Success is a tale of obstacles overcome, and for every obstacle overcome, an excuse not used.”

~ Robert Brault

“People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them.”

~ George Bernard Shaw

In his best-selling book “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People”, Stephen R. Covey explains that the first habit of people who accomplish what they set out to do is that they're proactive. That is, they take responsibility for the results that they get and they see themselves as being the creators of their lives. They don't identify themselves as victims of external conditions, and they don't allow others to dictate their fate.

The second habit of people who achieve their intended results is that they begin with the end in mind, which means that they decide what they want to create.

In this chapter we'll cover the following:

- Take the Role of Creator of Your Life
- The Importance of Deciding What You Want

TAKE THE ROLE OF CREATOR

If you're going to make a serious commitment to creating and achieving your life list, you need to identify yourself as the Creator of your life. That is, you need to fully embrace the fact that your life is being created by you. A lot of people take on the role of Victim in their life by deciding that they can't have what they want for a variety of reasons. Here are some examples:

- Their boss is a jerk who takes credit for their work and doesn't want to see them succeed.
- Their parents always struggled financially and they're doomed to repeat the same pattern.
- They're not smart enough.

- They're too old.
- They just don't have the time or energy to do what they want.
- The last relationship they were in completely destroyed their self-confidence and self-esteem.
- They've failed so many times and made so many mistakes, that there's just no way to repair the damage.
- They were bullied and made fun of when they were in grade school.
- They don't have any special talent or ability.

The complaints and excuses that people come up with of why they'll never be able to achieve their dreams could fill an entire book, which we can entitle as follows:

- "Why I'll Never Be Able to Have What I Want"; or
- "The Book of Lamentations".

When a person focuses on all of the reasons why they can't do something, they're immediately filled with a sense of paralysis, hopelessness, and helplessness. People who are serious about living their dreams need to make a shift from being a Victim to being a Creator. As a Creator, they begin to develop the capacity to envision outcomes and take **steps**—small steps, if necessary--toward manifesting these outcomes.

David Emerald refers to this same principle of moving from a Victim Orientation to a Creator Orientation in his book ["The Power of Ted"](#). As David explains, a Creator knows that he/she always has a choice, regardless of circumstances.

If you've been playing the role of the Victim—coming up with excuses that explain why you can't get what you want, blaming others for the things that are wrong in your life, constantly complaining but doing nothing to remedy the situations you complain about, and so on—you have to become a Creator.

A Creator does the following:

- They decide what they want.
- They believe in their ability to design and create their own life.
- They keep focused on their vision, regardless of outside events and circumstances.
- They take consistent action toward achieving their goals.

- They know that sometimes they have to change course because the winds have changed; when this happens, they simply adjust their sails and look for a different route to reach their intended destination.
- They keep going despite temporary setbacks.
- They see mistakes as feedback. They assess what they did wrong, they modify their approach accordingly, and they try again.
- Each time that they fall they get back up again.
- If someone else gets in the way of the achievement of their goals, they see that person as a challenge that needs to be overcome.
- They don't listen to anyone who tries to tell them that they're out of the game.
- They don't give their power away.
- They know that it's not about getting others to change.
- They give themselves permission to go after their dreams, instead of waiting to get permission from others.
- They make their own decisions; they don't allow others to make decisions for them.
- They know that sometimes the going may be slow, but they'll get to their intended destination nonetheless.
- They constantly ask: "What do I want to happen here?", and move toward it by choosing, instead of reacting.
- They do what they can, with what they have, where they are.



Covey explains in “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People” that you should imagine a circle that contains everything that you’re concerned about. This can include taxes, the state of the economy, your family’s health, and so on. This is your Circle of Concern. There are probably many things within your Circle of Concern which you can’t do anything about. However, inside your Circle of Concern there’s a smaller circle, which contains the things which concern you, and which you can do something about. That’s your Circle of Influence.

If a Creator is negatively impacted by an external event, they focus on those things which are within their Circle of Influence. That is, they place their attention on those things over which they have control, instead of worrying about things they can do nothing about. By acting within their Circle of Influence, they gradually expand the circle until there are more and more things they can have an impact on.

Mohandas Gandhi—the man who led India to its independence from Britain—is an excellent example of someone who achieved great things by asking himself at each step of the way what he could do within his Circle of Influence. Gandhi started his movement by going out into the rice paddies in Indian villages, and quietly talking to the field laborers. In this way, he gradually expanded his Circle of Influence—by showing compassion, by fasting, by practicing nonviolence, and through moral persuasion—, until his influence was so great that the British granted India its independence.

Frank W. Gunsaulus is someone else who was able to expand his Circle of Influence by doing what he could with what he had at the moment. Dr. Gunsaulus was a clergyman. One day he announced in the newspapers of Chicago that he would preach a sermon the following Sunday morning entitled: “What I Would Do If I Had a Million Dollars!” The announcement caught the eye of Philip D. Armour, a wealthy meatpacker and grain merchant, who decided to attend. In his sermon, Dr. Gundaulus pictured a trade school for the practical arts and sciences in which the students would be taught to “learn by doing”. The clergyman said the following: “If I had a million dollars, I would start such a school.”

After the sermon Mr. Armour walked up to the clergyman, introduced himself, and offered him the million dollars to start the school that he had described. That was the beginning of the Armour Institute of Technology (now the Illinois Institute of Technology). Dr. Gundaulus did not have the money to start the school he envisioned. However, he had a vision, he had great oratory skills, and he had a pulpit to preach from. By utilizing what he had, he was able to pull someone who did have a million dollars into his Circle of Influence.

The mindset of a Creator is “I am responsible for me, and I can choose.” The language used by a Creator is the following:

- Let’s look for alternatives.
- What do I want to happen?
- What baby steps can I take to begin moving toward what I want?
- How can I get the money so that I can do this?
- I choose to . . .
- I will find a way.

Brian Tracy writes in his book “Goals! How to Get Everything You Want--Faster Than You Ever Thought Possible” that when he was twenty-one years old he was broke, he had a job working construction, and he lived in a small one-room apartment. One night he was sitting at the small kitchen table and he had a sudden flash of awareness that changed his life: “No one was coming to the rescue.” He realized that everything that happened to him from that moment on was completely up to him. He was responsible for his life.

In his book, “Life Strategies”, Phillip C. McGraw (Dr. Phil) cautions that if you don’t accept responsibility for yourself and for your life you will misdiagnose every problem and will therefore mistreat every situation. He indicates that you need to stop attributing your pain to an external source; instead, start concentrating on the thoughts, behaviors, and choices which you can change to get a better result.

Dr. Phil suggests that you remember the following:

- You choose where to be.
- You choose how to act.
- You choose what to say.
- You choose whether to go or stay.
- You choose whom to be with.
- You choose what to concentrate on.
- You choose what to believe.
- You choose what behaviors to take in reaction to different stimuli.
- You choose what to say to yourself about the circumstances you find yourself in.

“Managing the power of choice, with all of its creative and spiritual implications, is the essence of the human experience . . . Choice is the process of creation itself.”

~ Caroline Myss

Napoleon Hill is famous for having spent two decades conducting research in order to organize a Philosophy of Personal Achievement. He created a formula for success by conducting interviews with over 500 people of the caliber of Henry Ford, Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, John D. Rockefeller, George Eastman, William Wrigley Jr. and Charles M. Schwab. Hill discovered that one of the most important ingredients of success was having personal initiative, and he used Frank Winfield Woolworth as an example.

Woolworth was born on a meager potato farm; however, he wanted to succeed in life, and he recognized that success was something that he was going to have to achieve for himself, without someone else telling him what to do, or how to do it. While working in a dry goods store in Watertown, N.Y., Woolworth had the idea of opening a store in which everything would sell for either a nickel or a dime. He then acted on his own personal initiative in putting his ideas into action. Although his first store failed within weeks after opening, soon afterwards he opened up another store. Eventually he had a chain of “Five and Ten” stores which yielded him a fortune.

YOUR ATTITUDE IS THE FIRST THING YOU SHOULD CONTROL

“Nothing can stop the man with the right mental attitude from achieving his goal; nothing on earth can help the man with the wrong mental attitude.”

–Thomas Jefferson

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

- Viktor E. Frankl

“Radiate an attitude of well-being and confidence.”

- Earl Nightingale

"The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind."

- William James

“A man cannot directly choose his circumstances, but he can choose his thoughts, and so indirectly, yet surely, shape his circumstances.”

- James Allen

Viktor Frankl was a distinguished psychiatrist and a survivor of unspeakable atrocities at the hands of the Nazis in one of their concentration camps. He chronicled his experiences as a concentration camp inmate in his 1946 book, “Man’s Search for Meaning”. During his ordeal, Frankl discovered the following: “Everything can be taken from a man or a woman but one thing: the last of human freedoms to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.”

Our attitude can keep us free, regardless of what may be going on around us at any given moment. Frankl discovered that by controlling his attitude, the concentration camp fell away. His mind was free to roam anywhere that he wanted it to roam; he could think about whatever he wanted to think about.

Even if there’s nothing else that you can control in any given moment, at the very least you can control your attitude. We each shape our own lives, and the shape of it is determined by the attitude that we hold most of the time. What we receive in life is due in large measure to our overall attitude.

Your attitude is incredibly powerful. Whenever you find a person getting outstanding results, you’ll find a person with a good attitude. These people take the attitude toward themselves that they can accomplish what they set out to accomplish, that achievement is the natural order of things, and that there’s no good reason why they can’t be competent and successful. They have a healthy attitude toward themselves and, as a result, toward life and the things that they want to accomplish.

Frequently these people are not smarter or more talented than the majority of the people by which they’re surrounded. But they have the right attitude. Successful people come in many different degrees of intelligence, background, and education. But they have one thing in common: they expect more good out of life than bad, and they expect to succeed more often than they fail.

When there's something that you want, take the attitude that there are more reasons why you can have it than why you can't. Set out for it, work for it, and ask for it.

Act toward the world, and everyone else, with an attitude calculated to produce the results that you want. If what you want is to be more successful in what you're doing, act as if you're already in possession of that success. Expect success, long before the materially tangible rewards of success have been earned.

MISTAKEN CAUSES OF GETTING WHAT YOU WANT OUT OF LIFE

"The Science of Getting Rich" is a success classic written in 1910 by Wallace D. Wattles, a man born in the state of Illinois in 1860, with little formal education, who lived very near poverty most of his life but died a rich man. Although Wattles talks in his book about "getting rich", we're going to substitute that phrase with the following phrase: "getting what you want out of life".

In Chapter 2 of "The Science of Getting Rich", Wattles explains that people tend to think that the following are the causes of getting what you want out of life:

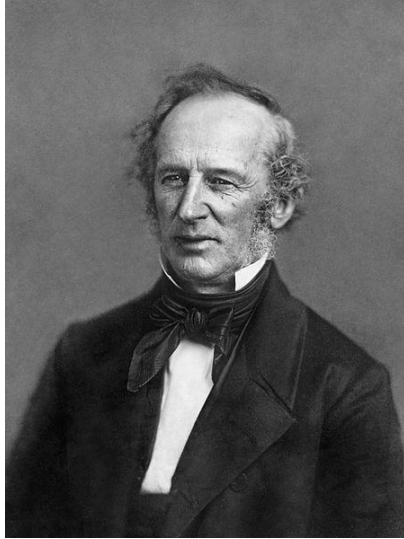
- Your environment. That is, your neighborhood, town, city, state, or country.
- How much talent you have or how smart you are.
- Your education.
- Having easy access to capital.
- The state of the economy.

However, Wattles explains one by one why these factors are not the causes of achieving your best life.

Getting what you want out of life is not a matter of your environment; there are countless examples of people working in the same business and in the same neighborhood, but one fails while the other succeeds. If the environment were the cause of getting what you want out of life, everyone in the same state would be rich, while those in another state would all be poor. Although it is true that some environments or locations are more favorable than others, the environment is not the cause of getting what you want out of life.

Also, talent is not the cause of getting what you want out of life. There are many talented people who never amount to much, and there are people with little talent running successful businesses and doing well in life. In addition, there are many people with high IQs that fail to achieve any sort of success.

Furthermore, formal education is not the cause of getting what you want out of life. The world is full of people with impressive letters after their names, who are not able to achieve what they want from life. On the other hand, there are many college dropouts who are able to create the lives that they want for themselves and for their families. An example of someone who reached incredible heights despite his lack of education is Cornelius Vanderbilt.



Cornelius Vanderbilt

Cornelius Vanderbilt-- the patriarch of the Vanderbilt family and one of the richest Americans in history--came from a family of modest means. His father supplemented his meager agricultural income by operating a ferry between Staten Island and Manhattan. Cornelius left school at the age of eleven. However, his lack of formal education was never an obstacle for him. He learned by doing.

Vanderbilt began working on—and then owning--ferries and schooners. With their increasing popularity in the 1820s and '30s, he moved on to steamboats and steamships. He went on to buy and then consolidate New York's major railroad lines, as well as providing the first rail service between New York and Chicago. The Vanderbilt family's spectacular wealth—which is evident if you visit their Newport, Rhode Island mansions—was created by Cornelius Vanderbilt's grit and determination.¹

In addition, a lack of capital will not prevent you from getting what you want out of life. You can slowly begin to get access to capital and, as you progress, the access to capital will become easier and faster. John D. Rockefeller is a great example of this. Like Vanderbilt, he came from a family of modest means. His father was a peddler who barely made ends meet (he was a bigamist and would be gone for long stretches of time). As a child, Rockefeller earned extra money raising turkeys, selling potatoes and candy, and eventually loaning small sums of money to neighbors.

Rockefeller's first job after graduating from high school at age sixteen was as an assistant bookkeeper--for fifty cents a day--at Hewitt & Tuttle. He was diligent and a hard worker, and he was religious about saving his money. Soon, he was given bigger responsibilities at Hewitt & Tuttle. Shortly after that, Rockefeller began to engage in trading ventures on his own account. He was naturally cautious and only undertook a business venture after carefully weighing a course of action. Once he felt certain that the venture would succeed, he acted boldly and saw it through to fruition.

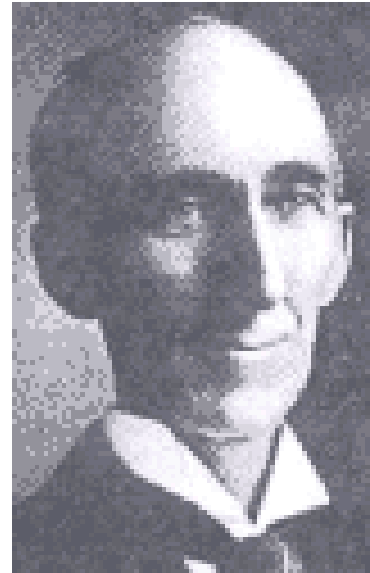
“All anyone really requires, as a capital on which to start a successful career, is a sound mind, a healthy body and a genuine desire to be of as much service as possible to as many people as possible.”

- Napoleon Hill

¹ Cornelius Vanderbilt is often referred to as a “robber baron”, which is a term that refers to American capitalists who were active in the latter part of the 19th Century and who became wealthy through unfair and illegal business practices. However, in his book, “The Myth of the Robber Barons”, Burton Folsom explains that calling men like Vanderbilt and John D. Rockefeller robber barons is a misconception. He divides the entrepreneurs who were active from about 1850 to 1910 into two groups: market entrepreneurs and political entrepreneurs. The market entrepreneurs, such as Vanderbilt and Rockefeller, succeeded by providing quality products or services at competitive prices. In contrast, the political entrepreneurs used the power of government to succeed. They tried to gain subsidies, or in some way use the government to stop competitors. The latter were the true robber barons.

By the age of twenty-three Rockefeller had saved up enough money to invest four thousand dollars in an oil refinery in Cleveland, Ohio, along with a few business partners. The commercial oil business was in its infancy at that time. In 1870 he founded the Standard Oil Company which went on to dominate the oil industry, and which made him the world's richest man, and the first American worth more than a billion dollars.²

In his book, “The Art of Money Getting”, P.T. Barnum—who lived from 1810 to 1891 and is best known for founding the circus that became the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus--explains the following: “Nine out of ten of the rich men of our country today, started out in life as poor boys, with determined wills, industry, perseverance, economy and good habits.” Here are three of the examples he uses:



- Although Stephen Girard started life as a poor cabin boy, he personally saved the US government from financial collapse during the War of 1812.
- A.T. Stewart was a poor Irish boy who migrated to the US and went on to make a fortune in what was at the time the most extensive dry goods business in the world.
- John Jacob Astor was a poor farmer boy, but when he died he was worth twenty million dollars.

In addition, the state of the economy isn't what determines whether or not you get what you want from life. The Great Depression started in about 1929, and lasted until the late 1930s or early 1940s. Michael J. Cullen started his career working as a warehouse boy with “The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company”. In 1930, he came up with the idea of a “supermarket.” His idea was to create a new type of food store with a focus on the following: low prices, larger square footage, cash sales, no delivery service, and low rent locations with lots of parking.

In the midst of the Great Depression, he began buying or renting deserted warehouses and manufacturing plants, and stocking them with huge quantities of cheap food, clothing, and household supplies. Within a few years he was a multimillionaire.

For all of the reasons set forth above, Wally Wattles³ concludes that the aforementioned factors--your environment, talent, education, money, or the state of the economy--cannot be the cause of getting what you want from life. So, if getting what you want out of life is not a result of the factors discussed above, what does living your best life depend on? It depends foremost on taking responsibility for your life, and making the decision to take matters into your own hands. The other ingredients for creating your best life will be revealed in the rest of this eBook.

² [Source](#)

³ The image at the top left of this page is of Wally Wattles.

Seeing yourself as being the Creator of your life, recognizing that no one is coming to the rescue, accepting that success is something that you're going to have to achieve for yourself, and making a commitment to creating the best possible life that you can by making the choices that are right for you is the first step toward creating and achieving your life list. If you don't believe that ultimately you're the master of your destiny, it's going to be very difficult, if not impossible, for you to achieve what you want in life. Make the decision right now to see yourself as a Creator, regardless of what may be going on in your life at the moment.

If you'd like to read more stories about creators, take a look at the report, "14 Case Studies - People Living Their Best Lives", and read the following two case studies:⁴

- Sylvester Stallone
- Oprah Winfrey

EXERCISE 1: STORY OF A CREATOR

There are stories all around you of people who could have made all sorts of excuses explaining why they couldn't achieve their goals, but instead of giving up, they got to work on making their goals happen. This includes people who had to overcome obstacles, physical limitations, failures, critics, and saboteurs. You can find these stories everywhere:

- In the biographies of famous people;
- In novels;
- In movies;
- Among your own friends and family;
- There are probably instances in your own past in which you set a goal and persisted until you reached it, even if circumstances or other people seemed to be conspiring against you.

In your Life List journal, write down the story of someone who was playing the role of Victim and then shifted to being a Creator. In the alternative, write down the story of someone who could have used a negative situation as an excuse not to accomplish their goals (a physical handicap, a learning disability, abusive parents, and so on), but, instead, they chose to forge ahead.

⁴ The report, "14 Case Studies – People Living Their Best Lives", is part of the package that you received when you purchased "How to Live Your Best Life".

EXERCISE 2: THE LANGUAGE OF A CREATOR

Open your Life List Journal to a blank page, and create two columns on the page. On the left-hand column write down all of the “Victim Statements” that you’ve been saying to yourself lately. These can include things such as the following:

- I did badly on that test because my professor isn’t good at explaining the subject matter.
- I’ll never be in a good relationship because my parents had such a dysfunctional marriage.
- She was able to start her own business because her parents gave her the seed money she needed to get started. I wish I had rich parents so that I could start my own business, too.
- I just can’t find the time to do what I want.
- I can’t focus on my work because I’m upset over what my colleague said at the meeting this morning.

Then, on the right-hand column, change each “Victim Statement” into a “Creator Statement.” Here are some examples:

- If I don’t understand the professor’s explanation, then I need to look for outside reading so that I can understand the topic; I also need to see the professor during office hours and ask for a clarification.
- I’ve learned from my parents what not to do in a relationship; now I’m going to look for positive role models so that I can see what a strong marriage looks like.
- Since I don’t have rich parents who can lend me the money to start my own business, I’ll just have to be more creative and resourceful in order to get the funds that I need.
- I need to set priorities to make sure that I use my time to accomplish the things that are most important to me.
- I need to find a way to release my negative feelings about what happened at the meeting this morning so that I can focus on my work.

It should look something like this:

Victim Statement	Creator Statement

EXERCISE 3: TAKE INVENTORY OF YOUR RESOURCES

You're going to take inventory of all the resources that you have at your disposal—including money, contacts, skills, knowledge, and so on. Go ahead and make a list of your resources in your Life List Journal:

Inventory - Contacts: Make a list of all the people you know and have a good relationship with. It can include your parents, your siblings, your boss, your co-workers, your banker, your customers, your friends, people from your alumni association, teachers or professors you got along with well, and so on. Once you've identified all of your contacts, you're going to go through your list to determine who can put in a good word for you, give you advice, connect you with somebody else who could be in a position to help you, or be of assistance in some other way.

Inventory - Skills and Knowledge: Make a list of all your degrees and all of the seminars you've taken. List every job you've ever had—including internships and volunteer work—and everything you learned in those jobs. What are your hobbies? List everything you know how to do, and all the problems you know how to solve.

Don't discard any of your skills because you think that it's something that anyone can do; just because something comes easily to you does not mean that it comes easily to everyone else. And just because you've devoted time and effort to learning how to do something, does not mean that everyone else has done so as well.

Inventory – Achievements: Make a list of all of your past achievements. Analyze each one and write down what talents, skills, preparation, attitudes, and so on you relied on in order to accomplish these things.

Inventory - Finances: Make a list of all of your financial assets, including any cash you have on hand, any money in your savings account, any real estate you own, and your investment portfolio. Also, list any assets you own which could quickly be converted into cash. Having good credit is also a financial asset. Money can always come in handy, whether it's to hire a consultant, to get additional education, or even to hire an attorney if you have to.

Inventory - Character Traits: Sometimes your best resources will be your ability to persevere, your ability to stay positive, and your ability to choose your attitude, regardless of what else might be going on around you. Having the ability to look at a situation from several different perspectives is also a great asset.

EXERCISE 4: THE WISE CHOICE PROCESS

Right now, identify a situation in which you've been acting out the role of Victim, whether of circumstances or other people. Is there something you want but haven't been able to get and you're blaming someone else or some particular circumstance? Is there something that you're always complaining about but aren't doing anything to try and fix? Take a few minutes to write about it in your "Life List Journal".

Then, take the situation that you wrote about and follow the Wise Choice Process in order to make a decision on how to best proceed. The Wise Choice Process is a decision making model that asks you to answer the following six questions:

1. What is my present situation?
2. How would I like my situation to be?
3. Do I have a choice here? (Hint: For a Creator, the answer here is "yes".)
4. What are my possible choices?
5. What's the likely outcome of each possible choice?
6. Which choice will I commit to?

Remember to go back to the list of resources at your disposal that you created for Exercise 3 to help you come up with a list of your possible choices or alternatives. Write down at least five things that you can do with these resources, no matter how small, so that you can start shifting from being a Victim to being a Creator in the situation you've identified. Then make sure you take those steps.

EXERCISE 5: EXPAND YOUR CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE


Expand your Circle of Influence by asking yourself the following questions:

- Who do you need to meet who could help you with the situation in which you're currently trying to shift from being a Victim to being a Creator? How could you meet him or her?
- What skills do you need to acquire? What additional knowledge do you need?
- Do you need more money in order to be able to influence the situation? If so, how start generating alternative for getting the money that you need.
- What else could you do? Do you need to start documenting all of the work that you do for your employer, the results that you're achieving, and keeping track of positive comments you get from clients? Do you need to get an article published to get more recognition in your field? Do you need a life coach to help you plan out a strategy?

THE IMPORTANCE OF DECIDING WHAT YOU WANT

There's a short pamphlet which was written in 1926 called "It Works", which is often cited by self-development experts. The very first page of the pamphlet says the following: "If you know what you want, you can have it." The problem is, as incredible as it may sound, that most people don't really know what they want. The great American writer and humorist Mark Twain summed it up neatly when he said:

"I can teach anybody how to get what they want out of life. The problem is that I can't find anybody who can tell me what they want."



"Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?"

~ Mary Oliver

In "The Magic Lamp" Keith Ellis explains that it was rumored that a philosopher in Europe once recorded the following message on his voicemail: "This device is programmed to ask two simple questions: Who are you and what do you want? Most people live their entire lives without answering either one." In order to create your best life, you need to be able to answer both of these questions.

In the previous section we discussed the importance of shifting from being a Victim—of circumstances, of events, of other people—to being a Creator. Once you've identified yourself as a Creator the question then becomes: what are you going to create? You decide what to create by deciding what it is that you want.

Stephen Covey suggests in "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People" that you decide what you want by beginning with the end in mind. He recommends that you try the following exercise: See yourself walking into a funeral parlor and noticing that it's filled with people who you know. As you walk to the front of the room and look inside the casket, you realize that the funeral is for you. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Who's there?
- What does each of the speakers say about you as they take the podium?
- How are they describing you?
- What contributions and achievements would you like for them to mention?
- What do you want to be remembered for?
- What legacy are you leaving behind?
- Have you made a positive difference in their lives?



For example, if you're a married man, you could write down something like the following for how you want your wife to remember you⁵:

I want Emily to remember me as a caring, patient husband, who loved her deeply. I want her to say that I had a great sense of humor, and that I made her laugh, even during the tough times. I want her to say that she felt safe with me, that I was her rock, and that we were a great team.

I want her to remember all of the trips that we took together, our morning runs, and the time we took tango lessons and I kept stepping on her feet. I also want her to remember all those evenings we spent sitting on the couch, snuggled up close, watching TV as the kids slept upstairs, feeling that life was good. I want her to say that she's glad that she chose me to spend her life with.

Go ahead and write down how you want to be remembered by your siblings, your best friend, your colleagues, your children, and so on. Really ponder about the things that you would like the most important people in your life to say about you. If there's a relationship that you would like to have in your life, but that you don't currently have—for example, you want to get married some day, but you're single at the moment--, go ahead and write something down for that relationship as well.

Here are some more questions you should ask yourself to help you determine whether you begin with the end in mind:

- Have I decided what I want?
- Have I identified what's most important to me?
- Do I know what success means to me? Is my ladder leaning against the right building?
- Do I have long-term goals covering different areas of my life?
- Do I have mid-term and short-term goals that will move me closer to achieving my long-term goals?
- Where do I want to be a year from now? Five years from now? Ten years from now? Twenty years from now?
- Do I devote my time to what matters most to me?

⁵ [Helm](#) image is courtesy of [macieklew](#).

- Who are the most important people in the world to me? Do I spend enough time with them?
- Am I doing what I enjoy? Am I having fun?
- Do I know where I'm headed?
- Am I on the right path?
- Am I being authentic?
- Do I allow myself to be me?
- Am I trying to be somebody I'm not?

Everything that you're experiencing in this moment is a result of all the decisions you've made up to this point in your life. You're living the consequences of your past actions and inactions. Use this eBook to decide exactly what it is that you want, and to begin acting toward creating those results.

Before an architect builds a house, they create a blueprint. Before someone starts a business, they create a business plan; the business plan includes an exit strategy, as well as where they plan to be a year after the business is started, in two years, in three years, and so on. In much the same way, by creating a life list you'll be creating a blueprint so that you can live your best life.

The greater the clarity that you have about what you want, the more you'll be able to achieve, and the faster you'll be able to achieve it. Chapter Three of this eBook contains five exercises which will help you decide exactly what it is that you want.

Get your very own copy of “How to Live Your Best Life – The Essential Guide for Creating and Achieving Your Life List” by [clicking here](#).