Are You Ready to Succeed
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The Big Idea

Many people hanker for a happy and successful life, and try different avenues to lead to happiness and success - but far too often fall short of achieving these goals.

A process, however, exists that can be used to change one's life and achieve what one desires. As promulgated in a popular, innovative and unconventional course called “Creativity and Personal Mastery” that is taught by Dr. Srikumar S. Rao at Columbia Business School, it identifies important points on how one can improve one’s life tremendously through defining personal ethics and goals and working to achieve them.

Why You Need This Book

This outstanding book focuses on personal development - but eschews the “established” methods for an unconventional and exhilarating new approach which might just be able to change your life for the better. If you are really serious about enjoying abundant success and fulfillment and are eager to enjoy your true potential, but have so far been unsuccessful at your attempts to learn to do so, and are open to trying something new - then this book is for you.

The only question is: Are You Ready to Do It?

The Mental Model

A “mental model” is a notion we have of how the world works, of how things ought to be done or are done. People use mental models to explain why things happen. You use them to console yourself and tell you what you should do. Most of the time, you don’t even know you are using them.

- Be open to positive changes in your life because you want them to take place.
- Pause whenever you encounter new ideas, ponder them, and explore their ramifications. Keep bringing them to mind at odd moments until you feel completely comfortable with them.
- Start a journal and make entries regularly and frequently.
- Be particularly aware of your emotional state; write it down and see how it changes over time as you continue to ponder the ideas and concepts presented.
- Recognize that this is merely a starting point. You are launching yourself onto a path of awareness and growth that will take years, decades; maybe the rest of your life.

Change Matters

The first step to take is of course to realize that change does matter, and not only to us as individuals but to everyone. Therefore it has to take place at not only one level.
1. **Individual attitudinal change.** We will have to recognize that we do not function in isolation, that we have an impact on society and are, in turn, impacted by it. It’s counterproductive to profit at the expense of others. Greed is bad for everyone.

2. **Organizational structural change.** The world may have altered greatly in the last few years, but our institutions have remained terribly antiquated and unsuited to the present era, and are thus grossly inadequate.

3. **Societal value change.** As long as material accumulation remains the index of success, we will have excess. We will amass things galore, but happiness will remain a stranger. Too many of our athletes, politicians and business leaders are poor role models, but we have spawned them through our idolatry.

Individual attitudinal transformation is to a certain extent under one’s control and will take place as one develops. If one attains a position of great prominence and influence, one can begin to work to change society as well.

**It Ain’t Real!**
*Your life is hemmed in by the things you know to be true that aren’t. It’s time to start setting yourself free.*

The first block to personal mastery, and one of the biggest, is our unquestioned mental models, our fixed ideas of how the world works and how things should or shouldn’t be done. We base them on perceptions and ideas, and use these models for everything, for better or for worse; our lives are jumbles of these models.

Some of these facets of your life, these mental models, are merely based on wrong perceptions and are not true at all. Maybe NONE of them are. Here’s a thought - maybe YOUR LIFE IS NOT REAL at all, and never has been!

A breakthrough happens when you slip into a parallel universe that has always been available to you but which you never really looked for - an alternate reality that you will discover for yourself and which will allow you to see your situation in a more positive light.

Here are some pointers:

- If you’re totally unable to live in your alternate reality, it is very likely that you’ve picked one that you cannot accept on any level. Remember that you can’t fool yourself.

- Write it down! Write down every scrap of evidence that supports it.

- Don’t complain and moan: Explicitly label each setback as a learning opportunity and list what you could have done to avoid it and what you will do in the future.

- Don’t immediately pick the most horrendously important thing bothering you right now. Start with something important to you, but not one of the big boulders in your life.

- Try living in a reality where others recognize your caring nature and where they come to you for help with their problems.

- Be gentle with yourself. If you’re not having much luck, don’t beat yourself over the head and make it one more way in which you can define yourself as a failure. Be patient!

**It’s Mental Chatter, and It’s Real!**
Your mental chatter is your constant companion. It’s the monologue that is going on in your mind. It never ever leaves you and you can’t even shake it loose. You build mental models out of your mental chatter.

And now that you know you can change your reality, what do you propose to do about it?

Here are some helpful hints you can consider:

- Observe your mental chatter dispassionately and record it.

- You may feel that you register only 10 percent of your thoughts. You’re wrong. It’s unlikely that you are aware of even 0.000001 percent of your thoughts. The good news is that even the most minimal level of awareness creates profound change.

- Don’t beat yourself up when you note the negativity of your thinking.

- Some of your mental chatter may turn out to be with minimal emotional undertones. That’s fine. Just note it.

- You may find that negative judgments tend to produce emotional downs, while thoughts of gratitude produce an elevation of spirits.

**Awareness: The Only Tool You Will Ever Need**

The weeds in your life will wither when you expose them to the light of awareness. This tool gives you emotional control. It helps you become conscious of what you are permitting to grow inside you, for something amazing to happen afterwards.

**The Witness: The Best Friend You Will Ever Have**

As mentioned previously, you have to dispassionately observe your mental chatter and categorize it. The “guy” that does this observation is the Witness.

A strange thing happens when you call your Witness up. You feel as if you are living life on two parallel tracks. You are doing things you normally do, yet are also watching yourself do the things you normally do.

The Witness is merely an observer. It doesn’t condemn nor judge nor compliment. It lets you see things as normally as you see them. The Witness is the one that calmly exposes you, and your models, to yourself. You see with absolute clarity the many ways in which you frustrate yourself and act in self-defeating ways. And you begin to learn to control what you let into your mind and influence you.

*That is how you start straightening out your life. Pull back and call your Witness into action.*

**You Can Change The Universe!**

Influencing the Universe is simple. It can be summed up in the Law of Increase: *Whatever you are truly grateful for and appreciate will increase in your life.*

Here are some important points to live by:

- There is much less work needed to get in sync with the Universe than you might think. Instead of frantically doing things to get what you want, you can try “calm being”. Be clear about what you want and relax - it’ll come to you in time.

- Of course you can’t abandon working for what you want wholesale, but you should learn to dovetail work with “calm being”.


- If you find it difficult to beam health, prosperity, and other good thoughts to your rivals at work or to irritating colleagues, pause to consider their lives. Imagine how terrible it must be to live like that.

- If you look sincerely for the miracles in your life, you will find them in droves and you will soon start producing them effortlessly.

- Don’t talk about producing miracles or about trying to produce them with skeptical friends or relatives. Try it silently and let your own faith develop.

- Be patiently persistent. For some it may take a long time. That’s okay - just as long as you keep your intent alive and strong.

- When you change, so does the Universe, and in conformity with your change. It cannot help but follow.

- So if you would like a job, you need to free your mind from thoughts based on desperate want and instead concentrate on being crystal clear about what you would like.

- If you seeking a significant other, you can stop the ceaseless search and instead concentrate on becoming the person with the qualities of the one you would like to find.

- If you feel that all this is “miraculous,” you’d be right. It is. You can produce these miracles. When you become practiced in this way of being, you’ll be able to produce them almost at will.

**Surrender to the Universe**

You need to be able to surrender to the Universe in order to bring all these things about. The process of surrender has four steps. It is important that you do them all:

1. First, take all actions with a clear understanding of what you would like to have happen. Be unambiguous about what it is that you would like to accomplish as a result of them.

2. Consciously wish that all outcomes be beneficial for all parties concerned. This is important. Our competitive society trains us to think in terms of “winning” at the expense of others. It does not have to be so. Instead, actively and sincerely wish that there are no losers.

3. Recognize that your actions are simply one possible way of achieving the outcome you want. Remember that you have a limited understanding of all the forces at play and from that limited viewpoint have selected your course of action as the “best.”

4. Detach yourself from the outcome. Accept whatever outcome the Universe provides. It’s better for you if you cheerfully accept whatever comes your way.

**Dropping Destructive Habits**

And of course, you also need to eliminate those habits of yours which may run counter to your drive to improve your life.

These things can help:

- Clearly and dispassionately note the damage being done by your behavior. Don’t beat yourself up about it. Just acknowledge that you have some bad habits and call it that.
Immediately shift your attention to your breath. You will notice that in times of upset, your breathing is fast and shallow. Slow it down. Take slow, deep breaths. Visualize golden, strength-giving light streaming in with your inhalation.

“I Hate My Job”
Transform your job so it is nourishing rather than draining. Try it with these helpful hints:

- Remember that focus is the key. Your job makes you miserable if you focus on the myriad things that are “wrong” with it. You can start making it totally rejuvenating when you begin by focusing on what is “right” with it. Ignore all the stuff - even if it is the vast majority - that you feel is “wrong.”

- You will have many people tell you that when you ignore the “horrible” things at work, you are actually helping them continue and perpetuating the status quo.

- You are doing this for you, not for the company you work for. You always work in your perceived best self-interest. Make this work for you!

You Create Your World from What is Inside You!
For you to be able to work easier with your mental model, you need to clean out some garbage that you carry inside you.

What’s Inside You?
If you are a fruit, what could be squeezed out of you? Would it be a syrup of happiness and contentment, or a bitter juice of guilt, depression, envy, worry, shame, sorrow, and other such emotions?

These emotions do not come from outside. They are within you all the time. The nasty stuff that emerges when you are squeezed is the beast you have been feeding.

The Benevolent-Universe Model
Here is a general-purpose, all-inclusive “This is the way the world works” comprehensive model:

- The Universe is a conscious and benevolent entity. It ALWAYS acts in your best interests and ALWAYS brings into your life EXACTLY what you need at any instant.

- Think of a complicated trapeze act. The aerialist lets go of the bar and does a dizzying array of twists and somersaults, and just as she finishes, the next bar is available for her to grasp. That’s how the Universe acts. The bar you need is ALWAYS available just when you need it. The choreographing is both split-second and brilliant.

- The lesson you need to learn is that you get exactly what you need at exactly the time that is appropriate.

- The people who come into your life are the very ones you need at the stage you are in. It’s perfect. It’s always been perfect, but you just never saw this before.

- It will always be perfect in the future as well. All you have to do is relax and go with the flow.

Beliefs Cannot Be Forced
You cannot force yourself to accept the proposed model. So what should you do?

You actively consider other perspectives and change what you focus on.
Coping With Senseless Tragedies
Look at suffering in a different perspective. Recognize that whenever it is present in your life, it is not for you to be in pain, but rather a chance for you to lessen it.

It is wonderful to live freely in this world - where you can accept that what you want is not always what you need.

Do you want to dwell with a deep sense of fulfillment and a higher sense of purpose in a peaceful abode? It’s up to you. It’s your choice alone. And it is far, far better to live in the bosom of a benevolent universe.

Are You Ready To Succeed?
You should not stop until you have ignited a transformation process that will then take over by itself and carry you the rest of the way.

Once you meet success, there is no turning back.

Let personal mastery work for you.

Discover it for yourself in your own life. That is when it will become a concrete reality for you - the “reality” that you will live in for the rest of your life.

Good luck!