Personal Excellence

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Do Good Anyway

Take Any Hit

Savor Your Life

Be a Servant Leader

Inner Strength

Peter Vidmar
Olympic Gold Medalist

"*Personal Excellence* is the only reading you'll need to do for continual self-improvement both personally and professionally!"
—Sharlene Hawkes, Former Miss America, award-winning ESPN broadcaster

CELEBRATING 25 years OF EXCELLENCE

MENTAL • BRAIN

Set and Achieve Goals

Exercise your mind and will.

by Eric Adler

YOUR BRAIN IS LIKE A COMputer hard drive. It stores all of the information you know and all the things you know how to do. For every action or activity, you need to recall information from this hard drive. But, you can only recall information that's stored. To know and do more, you must store more information.

Expanding your knowledge happens *naturally* when you have *new experiences*. But many people are afraid of making mistakes, and this fear inhibits them from trying new things and expanding their knowledge. The world is full of blamers, nay-sayers, and nit-pickers who thrive on pointing out others' mistakes. They play the "error game," and it forces them into becoming stagnant.

To develop a personality of success, follow these five steps:

1. Step out of the "error game," both actively and passively. The passive exit from the error game means not listening to every negative that comes your way. Some are valid, but many are not. You must decide the direction of your personal path in life. The active exit from the error game means to stop being negative. Whether it's directed toward others or toward yourself, negative self-talk inhibits growth and success.

2. Set your own goals. Only if you set your goals for yourself will you have the enthusiasm necessary to accomplish them. Successful men and women have specific, predetermined goals that they work toward. To win big in life, set a goal and then put out extra effort to achieve it. High-performance behavior comes when you work toward a goal you set for yourself (or a goal you adopt as your own). Few people have a clear-cut view of their goals. Imagine you meet a genie and are offered three wishes for free. But your wishes must be very concrete, and you have only 10 seconds to list them. Write them now! Can you come up with even three concrete things you want, when you want them, and how you want them? If you don't even know what you want, how are you supposed to know how to get it?

3. Make the time and effort. After you know where you want to go, you have to check what effort will be necessary to get there. It's better to over-estimate the effort required because if you have to make use of a larger effort than expected, you may rapidly lose the joy of working on it. It's much better if everything is simpler. Your willpower will grow and your energy increase. To keep your goal top of mind, write it on a piece of paper and then crumple it up into a "will ball." Now put it in your pants or shirt pocket. Carry it as long as it takes to achieve the goal. The "will ball" will constantly remind you of the goal.

4. Make the setting and achieving of goals a habit. You can choose the habits you want to have and ones to change. Think about which habits lead you to success and which don't. It's up to you to change the bad habits for good ones. It won't work *overnight*, but it will work.

5. Assess whether or not you're the person you want to be. Try this. For one full day, imagine a TV station follows you around with a camera crew for a series called *24 Hours in the Life of a Successful Person*. They follow you with their cameras all day until the time you go to bed. Try to observe yourself. What things do you do differently? These represent the difference between *what you are* and *what you would like to be*. If you say things differently, move differently, look and act friendlier, or are more helpful or understanding, this is the person you know has the *personality* to be more successful. Now it's up to you to make those changes in your own actions.

As you strengthen your personality, you will more easily emerge from every crisis a winner. PE

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ACTION: Follow these five rules to meet goals.

MENTAL • TOUGHNESS

Inner Strength

You can find and develop it.

by Peter Vidmar

IN THE EARLY 1950'S, MY father, John Vidmar, felt he was a fortunate man. He had a good job and was rising through the ranks as a sales rep with a company in Los Angeles. He had two degrees, a wonderful wife, and a growing family.

But one day, my dad stopped for lunch between appointments. He was having trouble swallowing his food. After lunch, he stopped by the doctor's office. The doctor spotted polio symptoms and told my dad to get to the hospital. Dad said that he couldn't because he had an appointment, a *job*.

"Go now," the doctor said. Hours later, dad lay in the hospital—dining through a straw. Day after day, my dad lay there, his life in the balance, hoping the virus would run its course and spare him.

As he lay there, his main thought was about what this was doing to his family. That concern, he said later, heightened his determination to get back out on the road, make sales, *provide for his family*.

The doctors came close to putting him in an iron lung. At one point, a doctor called for the dreaded machine that would make the body so dependent that it could never be removed.

Suddenly his breathing got better, and the virus disappeared. But it left him with an atrophied left leg and weak muscles. At least it left him alive.

When he left the hospital, he faced months of rehabilitation at home—hundreds of baths using a crane and pulley system and thousands of hours retraining muscles. But as soon as possible, John Vidmar was back making his rounds. He progressed from sales rep to senior VP in charge of all international operations for what became the largest pump company in the world.

One day, when I was 10 years old, my father came home with a bloodied face and broken glasses. My mother gasped, thinking he had been mugged. Dad said that he'd tripped while crossing the street, hitting the pavement face first. He talked of the embarrassment, then with a big smile on his face, he chuckled and said, "I've got to be more careful." I never heard him complain about his *handicap*, and I never forget that lesson.

My father's example helped me become an Olympic champion. Whatever my coach inflicted on me, I accepted, without complaint. How could I complain when every night I came home to a father who never quit?

You and I can thrive in difficult conditions. You may need to take calculated risks, innovate, and find ways to convert potential to performance. You may need to dig deeply within to find mental and physical strength you never knew you had. PE

Peter Vidmar, Olympic Gymnastics Champion, is a speaker, Chairman of the Board of USA Gymnastics and author of Risk, Originality, and Virtuosity, the Keys to a Perfect 10. *Visit www.petervidmar.com.*

ACTION: Tap into your inner strength.