The Five Major Pieces to the Life Puzzle  

by Jim Rohn

Make Success Come to You

Forget pursuing success, attract it instead!

QUICK OVERVIEW

In The Five Major Pieces to the Life Puzzle, Rohn unapologetically states that success must be attracted rather than pursued. And then, using a gimmick-free, proven approach, he explains exactly how to attract it.

Rohn observes that our personal philosophy establishes our attitude. Our attitude determines both the quantity and quality of our level of activity, and our activity level yields proportional results. But he points out that our lifestyle can be as satisfying at the beginning of our journey to success as it is when we have reached great achievements.

If you’re frustrated because success remains elusive, the common-sense advice he offers in this classic may change everything for you.

APPLY AND ACHIEVE

The starting place for success is your world view, or as Rohn terms it, your philosophy. Rohn notes that your philosophy comes from what you know, as well as how you came to know it. Your philosophy serves as the basis for what you view as important—your core values. It shapes your view on every subject, from politics to religion, to how and why money should be spent, to the amount and quality of time given to particular relationships.

According to Rohn, the best way to develop a powerful personal philosophy is to objectively review the conclusions you have drawn about life. Determine which of these conclusions have served you well, and which have inhibited your progress.

Take a moment to jot down your conclusions about the topics listed on the following page. Be sure to honestly state your thoughts. Then, carefully consider whether the conclusions you’re operating with serve to move you toward meeting your goals.

SUCCESS Points

In this book you’ll learn how to:

- Have an enviable lifestyle with your current income
- Create a personal philosophy that propels you toward success
- Avoid repeating past mistakes
- Start attracting success, rather than pursuing it
Note that if you circled “yes” for every topic, but you aren’t experiencing evidence that your goals are coming to fruition, take a closer look at your conclusion. There’s no shame in having a wrong conclusion, but there’s frustration and lack of success in keeping one.

In The Five Major Pieces to the Life Puzzle, Rohn walks you through the process of developing better conclusions—a more productive perspective and philosophy. He does this without telling you what to believe in any particular situation, but rather, how to evaluate what you do believe so you can determine whether it serves you or not, and then where to gather information to alter or refine your conclusions.

Our personal philosophy comes from what we know and from the process of how we came to know all that we currently know. Throughout our lives we receive input from a multitude of sources: school friends, associates, media influences, home, the streets; it comes from books, listening and observing.

As adults, all the new information that comes our way is examined through the filter of our personal philosophy. The concepts that seem to agree with the conclusions we have already reached are added to our storehouse of knowledge and serve to reinforce our current thinking. Those ideas that seem to contradict our beliefs are usually quickly rejected.

We are constantly in the process of checking our preexisting beliefs for accuracy or confirmation in the light of the new information. As we blend new with old, the result is either the strengthening of our past beliefs or the broadening of our current philosophy in light of new and valuable information about life and people.

Personal philosophy is like the set of the sail. We have all experienced the blowing winds of disappointment, despair and heartbreak. What guides us to different destinations in life is determined by the way we have chosen to set our sail. The way that each of us thinks makes the major difference in where each of us arrives. The difference is not circumstances; the difference is the set of the sail.

When the winds change, we must change. We must struggle to our feet and reset the sail in a manner that will steer us toward the destination of our own deliberate choosing. The set of the sail, how we think and how we respond, has a far greater capacity to destroy our lives than any challenges we face. Once we discipline ourselves to understand this, we will conclude that the great challenge in life is to control the process of our own thinking.

**Develop a Powerful Personal Philosophy**

- Make an objective review of conclusions we have drawn about life.
- Get positive information from our experiences, an objective observer, through others’ experiences, through books and audio messages, through journaling and reviewing our own experiences.
- Determine what daily, small errors in judgment we are making.
- Determine what daily, small disciplines will help us.
- Learn to listen to the still, small voice of success rather than the loud voice of negativity.

**ATTITUDE**

While philosophy deals essentially with the logical side of life, information and thinking habits—attitude—focuses primarily on emotional issues that affect our existence. What we know determines our philosophy. How we feel about what we know determines our attitude.

Like thoughts, emotions have the capacity to propel us toward future fortune or future disaster. The feelings we carry within us about people, our work, our homes, our finances and about the world around us collectively form our attitude. With the right attitude human beings can move mountains. With the wrong attitude they can be crushed by the smallest grain of sand.
Having the right attitude is one of the fundamentals of the good life. That’s why we must constantly examine our feelings about our role in the world and our possibilities for achieving our dreams. Since everything in life affects everything else, we must make a careful study of everything and everyone that might be having a wrong effect on our current attitude, including our past and our present circumstances.

The thoughts and feelings we allow ourselves to have today are shaping our future; the future is a mirror image of our current philosophy and attitude about life.

There is a special emotional magic when we design the future and set new goals with a specific purpose in mind. As we envision the future clearly, we experience a level of excited anticipation, and we are able to borrow from its inspiration for excitement in our energy levels, our relationships and our attitudes.

When we invest our experiences of the past, and borrow excitement of the future by clearly seeing it in our mind’s eye, then past experiences and future excitement become today’s servant.

The more clearly we see the future and the more keenly we sense its promise, the more positive our attitude becomes that we can and will achieve our dreams. It is this new attitude that will provide us with renewed ambition for progress and faith that we really can move mountains.

Things to Remember About Attitude

• We cannot succeed by ourselves.
• Appreciating self-worth is the beginning of progress.
• How we feel about ourselves is a matter of choice.
• How we feel is influenced by our associations.

ACTIVITY

Whatever life has handed us, whether it’s a lot or a little, it is our responsibility to do something with what we have been given. That is how we change pennies into fortunes and obstacles into opportunity—by taking all that we have and all that we are and putting it to work.

Sooner or later we must convert knowledge and good feelings into activity. The more we start with, the more we will receive for our disciplined work. The “more” being a sound personal philosophy and right attitude. The more we know and the better we feel about ourselves and our opportunities, the greater our chances for success will be.

Motivation is not how people change their lives. If a person is a fool and becomes motivated, he merely becomes a motivated fool.

But these aren’t enough in and of themselves—what we know and how we feel merely determine potential for achievement. Whether we actually achieve our goals is ultimately determined by our activity.

Our philosophy about activity and our attitude about hard work will affect the quality of our lives.

What we decide about the rightful ratio of labor to rest will establish a certain work ethic. That work ethic will determine how substantial or meager that fortune turns out to be.

Enterprise is always better than case. Every time we choose to do less than we could, this error in judgment has an effect on our self-confidence. Repeated every day, we soon find ourselves not only doing less than we should, but also being less than we should.

Fortunately, it is easy to reverse the process. Any day we choose, we can develop a new discipline of doing rather than neglecting. Every time we choose action over ease, or labor over rest, we develop an increasing level of self-worth, self-respect and self-confidence. In the final analysis, it is how we feel about ourselves that is the greatest reward from activity. It is not what we get that makes us valuable, it is what we become in the process of doing that brings value to our lives.

The Ratio of Activity to Rest

Life cannot be a process of all work and no rest. It is important to set aside sufficient time to regain our strength.

The Bible offers the philosophy of the ratio of six days of labor to one day of rest. For some this will seem somewhat heavy on the labor side. Each of us must select the ratio that best reflects the reward we are seeking, remembering that with diminished labor comes diminished rewards.

Our Activities

• Must Be Intelligent
• Must Be Planned
• Must Be Disciplined

Activity is a major part of the life puzzle. It is the power that
gives substance and meaning to our philosophy and our attitude. Intelligent, planned, intense and consistent activity creates new energy and keeps us moving toward the exciting future that our thoughts and desires have already designed for us.

RESULTS

Results are the harvest that comes from our past efforts. If the farmer has planted only a handful of seeds in the spring, he cannot expect to reap a very bountiful harvest in the fall. Likewise, if a person has engaged in only minimal activity in the past, he should not expect significant results in the present.

Results are always in direct proportion to effort. Those who rest in the spring do not reap in the fall, regardless of need and regardless of desire. Results are the reward reserved for those who had the foresight to seize an earlier opportunity. If the opportunity was missed, the reward will be withheld.

If our past labors produced a poor harvest, there is nothing we can do about it; we cannot alter the past. We cannot ask nature to make an exception to the rules no matter how hungry we are. Nor will nature permit us to ask the soil for an advance.

The only thing we can do is prepare for the inevitable arrival of another spring—another opportunity—and then plant, nourish and tend our new crop as diligently as possible, remembering the painful consequences of our past neglect.

In remembering the consequences, however, we must not allow ourselves to be overcome by them. Their lesson must serve us, not overwhelm us. If we are not satisfied with what we have achieved at this point in our lives, then now is the time to fix the future. Unless we change how we are right now, what we have will always be about the same. The same seed sown by the same sower will inevitably produce the same harvest. For the harvest to change, it may be necessary to change the seed, the soil, or more likely than not, the sower.

In designing a better future, the major focus of our plan should be on becoming more than we already are. If we are not happy with our current results, then the place to begin is with ourselves.

Everything we have in life—the tangibles as well as the intangibles—is a direct result of who we are. If we lost everything tomorrow, we could easily replace it all. Why? Because we acquired those things as a result of what we are. Assuming “what we are” has not changed, in time we will attract back into our lives everything we may have lost. The same applied knowledge, the same attitude, the same effort and the same plan will produce the same results.

If you want better, become better. Have a better philosophy, a better attitude and a better activity level so you can have better results.

Be sure to measure your results frequently, so you can ascertain that your philosophy, attitude and activity are serving you well.

LIFESTYLE

The final blending of our philosophy, attitude, activity and results is what creates this final personal quest that we call lifestyle. Lifestyle is how we choose to live and how we design our lives. It is the sophisticated understanding of the difference between life’s trinkets and life’s treasures.
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Some attribute their poor attitude about life to their low level of income. They maintain that if they ever solved their money problems, they would show us what happiness is really all about. They have not yet discovered that it was their failure to find happiness in the past that has affected their current income. Until they discover that happiness is a part of the cause and that wealth is merely an effect, their circumstances are not likely to change.

The exciting thing about lifestyle is that we can have it all now! We don’t have to wait until we are wealthy or powerful or famous to experience happiness.

Anyone can give money to charity; the real rewards lie in giving of ourselves and our time. For little more than the price of a movie ticket, anyone can attend a symphony orchestra. The music is just as stirring from the back of a concert hall during an afternoon matinee as it is from a private box on opening night. You don’t have to own a Rembrandt to appreciate his incredible genius.

You can have more than you’ve got because you can become more than you are.

We don’t have to be rich to live richly. All of the happiness and fulfillment we want can be ours right now simply by changing how we feel and what we think about this concept called lifestyle.

Lifestyle is really nothing more than the art of doing ordinary things extraordinarily well. Our lifestyle communicates a clear message about who we are and how we think. Lifestyle is where we go, what we do, and how we feel once we are there. Lifestyle is a mixture of substance as well as style, refinement as well as intellect, and emotional control in times of challenge as well as emotional release in times of joy and happiness.

Lifestyle means designing ways to live uniquely. It’s a skill to be mastered not a condition to be pursued. Lifestyle is finding new ways to bring joy, pleasure, excitement and substance into the lives of those we care for while we are working on our goals, not once we have achieved them.

Whether we offer our time, a shoulder to cry on, a word of sincere appreciation or our undivided attention, if we will just be there and really live in that moment, what an experience that could be!

CONCLUSION: URGENCY

The barrier to success is often that because we have so much, we tend to settle for so little. When we have a place to live, a phone, a television, a car, a source of income, clothes to wear and food to eat, we drift into a dangerous place called “the comfort zone.” We lack either the sense of overwhelming desperation or the incredible force of inspiration to drive us into the marketplace. We might often wish for more. We might frequently want more. But we have neither a burning need nor a burning desire to do what it takes to have more.

The most dangerous aspect of the comfort zone is that it affects our hearing. The more comfortable we are, the more oblivious we become to the sound of the ticking clock. Because there always seems to be so much time ahead of us, we unwittingly squander the present moment. We use it for entertaining ourselves rather than preparing ourselves.

Those who live in the comfort zone seem to have developed a strange philosophy about human immortality. “There’s always tomorrow. There’s always next week, next month, next year. There is no real cause for concern. There is no real need to do anything about changing right now. After all, it won’t always be the way it is… by this time next year things will be different for me.”

The problem with waiting until tomorrow is that when it finally arrives, it is called today.

Each of us must pause frequently to remind ourselves that the clock is ticking.

We cannot afford to wait for the “two minute warning.” We cannot afford to wait until the last few minutes to discover that our game plan wasn’t working.

We must challenge ourselves right now to a new level of achievement. We must impose upon ourselves a new discipline and develop an attitude about life that motivates us and inspires others. We must identify our current opportunity and embrace it. We must breathe our talent, vigor and a sense of urgency into its existence and discover all that we can do.

You can do it! You can change your life, and you can start right now by simply developing a new sense of urgency. May the pieces to your life puzzle come together smoothly, and may you enjoy the picture of that finished masterpiece as a result of our unwavering commitment to mastering the basics.

Let your efforts and the results give cause to those who will one day gather to pass judgment on your existence to speak only the simple phrase: . . Well done, good and faithful servant.
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**Summary**

The Five Major Pieces to the Life Puzzle is a guide to personal success. The book is about developing a lifestyle that is pleasing, enjoyable, and entertaining. Lifestyle is found in the process of understanding our current situation and making changes. It is not about the end result, but about the journey and the experiences along the way. Lifestyle is the sum total of all the things we do and the way we do them. This includes the things we say, the way we act, and the way we think. Lifestyle is also about the things we choose to do and the things we choose to leave out. Lifestyle is about the way we live our lives.

**About the Author**

For almost half a century, Jim Rohn brought extraordinary insights on success and personal development to readers, listeners and seminar attendees. He is acknowledged as one of the most influential thinkers on personal development, and mentored many of today’s top motivational speakers and trainers—both in person and through his countless audio/video programs and books.

Many of Rohn’s concepts are such gold standards that they are no longer formally attributed to him, such as his observation that “success is simple disciplines, repeated over time; failure is simple errors in judgment, repeated over time.”

In 1985 Jim Rohn was awarded the coveted CPAE award by the National Speakers Association, for outstanding performance and professionalism.

**Recommended Reading**

If you enjoyed this summary of The Five Major Pieces to the Life Puzzle, check out:

- QBQ: The Question Behind the Question by John G. Miller
- As a Man Thinketh by James Allen
- Jeffrey Gitomer’s Little Gold Book of YES! Attitude by Jeffrey Gitomer