

The link between personal development and success — in business and in life

It's been said that your level of success rarely exceeds your level of personal development. Here are six smart ways to invest in yourself so that you can build the life you most want for yourself and the people you care about. (Hint: they're easier to do than you might think!)



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Key takeaways

- There are six key components to engaging in personal development.
- Make personal development a true priority by tackling it as soon as you wake up.
- Don't overlook tried-and-true methods to improve yourself — you don't need the latest flashy technique in order to achieve results.

The legendary entrepreneur and motivational speaker Jim Rohn said it best: your level of success will rarely exceed your level of personal development. That's true whether you're talking about your life, your career or (if you're an entrepreneur) your business.

And yet how often do we sacrifice our personal development in favor of working one more hour or one more weekend, or of “vegging out” in front of the TV, or of any number of habits that don't help us grow as individuals?

It's no wonder many people aren't terribly satisfied with where they're at in life. We keep ignoring that crucial *personal* component that helps drive great results in areas that can make all the difference.

The good news: taking steps to develop yourself personally is not as arduous as you might think — not even close! One of the best approaches to personal development that we've encountered comes from Hal Elrod — author of the best-selling book ***The Miracle Morning***. Elrod researched the most effective, proven personal development practices used by top entrepreneurs. They included techniques such as meditation and visualization — strategies that were so well-known and obvious that Elrod nearly dismissed them due to their familiarity.

The upshot. Don't ignore the tried and true in a search for something new and flashy. According to Elrod himself: “we all want the latest and greatest thinking or the newest app to solve our problems, but I ultimately had to admit that these fundamental, well-established ideas were what the most successful people out there swear by.”

Six steps to personal development

Most of us benefit when we can take organized, systematic action steps toward a goal. Elrod decided the best route to success was not to try one or two of these strategies, but to commit to all of them. To that end, he created his Life S.A.V.E.R.S. system — a model that frames six key components of development in digestible pieces that can help you get, and stay, on track.

1. **Silence.** This can include meditation, prayer or both — any method to quiet the mind and regain calmness and focus.
2. **Affirmations.** Often misunderstood, affirmations are effective when you think positively about the thing you want to be or the goal you want to achieve and the action steps you need to take to get there.
3. **Visualization.** Simply visualizing your ideal outcome can trick your brain into thinking you're already there — and reduce your drive to do the work needed to achieve it. The key, says Elrod, is to bring your end goal back to the present day and envision yourself doing the necessary work in the moment to ensure that your long-term vision actually comes into being.
4. **Exercise.** Increasing the blood and oxygen to your brain boosts your cognitive function as well as your mental and emotional capacity, so that you can have the clarity needed to, as Elrod puts it, “crush every single day.”
5. **Reading.** Elrod emphasizes the importance of self-help books and articles to stay focused on continually improving yourself. Consistency is the key here. Often we stop reading when things are going well. But if you read just ten pages per day, which might take 15 minutes, you can get through approximately 18, 200-page self-help/ personal improvement books in a year. Think of what all that insight could mean for your development.
6. **Scribing.** Keeping a journal can also boost your personal growth, especially if you keep a daily gratitude journal in which you write down three things within the previous 24 hours for which you are grateful. The key with gratitude is to be thankful for something specific from your day — even if it is something very small. The power comes from the act of expressing gratitude — not from the magnitude of the thing you're thankful for.

The early bird

That said, Elrod has a big caveat about these practices: “you have to prioritize your own development, or you'll find ways to ignore it.”

Indeed, how many times do we put aside important personal and health-related matters so we can hit the office early — and then never end up going for that run or reading that book? “How you start your day isn't just one strategy that you could or could not do. It's literally the linchpin to your success and to reaching the next level,” says Elrod.

To combat that counterproductive procrastination, Elrod strongly encourages people to wake up early and dive right into their routine:

“these strategies will give you the edge to do superior work throughout your day, so waiting to fit them into your day doesn't really make sense. Meditation is proven to help you focus better. Exercise brings oxygen to the brain and helps you be a better thinker. If you do these things later on in your day, you won't harness the benefits when you need to make important decisions.”

Can't fathom the thought of waking up earlier than you already do? Elrod offers the following tips — so easy a child could follow them, he says — to get up and go.

1. **Set your intentions before you go to bed.** Our first thought in the morning is almost always the same as the last thought we had before falling asleep. So it's when you go to bed that you get to determine how good or bad you will feel when you wake up.
2. **Put your alarm clock across the room.** If you have to get out of bed and walk across the room to shut off your alarm, you're instantly three to four times more awake than if you shut it off from the comfort of your bed. This is another example of how something really obvious can be extremely powerful.
3. **Start your day with a full glass of water.** After five to eight hours of sleep, our bodies are dehydrated. Yet most of us reach for a cup of coffee right away, which only further dehydrates us. Instead, make sure there's a full glass of water on your bathroom sink each morning, and drink it all as soon as you wake up. This primes your body to take action.



You can take these actions while you're half asleep. By the time you're done, you'll find that you're awake and ready to make great things happen.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the time we spend on ourselves may have a big impact on our ability to pursue what we most want from life and achieve great things we aspire to. But the right intention and focus are crucial, of course. Make the time you focus on yourself a true investment — one that can generate real returns — by taking steps that will help you improve in meaningful ways and truly live your own best life.

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Falkenberg-Poetz & Pidhirniak Wealth

Eric Falkenberg-Poetz B.Comm, CIM®, FCSI®

Wealth Advisor, Investment Advisor

Eric.Falkenberg-Poetz@RichardsonWealth.com

Michael Pidhirniak CFP®, CIM®

Wealth Advisor, Investment Advisor

Michael.Pidhirniak@RichardsonWealth.com

Anne Marie Jess BA (Hons)

Associate Investment Advisor

Anne-Marie.Jess@RichardsonWealth.com

Mikayla Penner BBA

Associate

Mikayla.Penner@RichardsonWealth.com

Carly Kalynchuk B.Comm

Assistant

Carly.Kalynchuk@RichardsonWealth.com

www.FPPW.ca

To setup an appointment, please contact Carly Kalynchuk at Carly.Kalynchuk@RichardsonWealth.com or toll-free at 1.866.205.3550 or locally at 780.409.7764.



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