

## 5 Key Lessons from 10 Years of Personal Development

It was a little over ten years ago that I discovered the world of personal development.

Since then I've read hundreds of books on the topic and wrote 20+ books myself.

Every time I sit at my desk to write a new book, I find myself rediscovering the same concepts. So, I thought, "Why not share them with you today?"

Here you are. Below are 5 key lessons I learned from 10 years of personal development:

- #1. Your environment is more powerful than your willpower
- #2. What you believe often becomes your reality
- #3. Your imagination is stronger than your limitations
- #4. Consistency is more important than intensity
- #5. Self-compassion beats self-criticism

## Lesson #1. Your environment is more powerful than your willpower

Your environment—the people you surround yourself with, the books you read, the videos you watch, the neighbourhood you live in—has an enormous impact on your present reality and the future you will create.

The worse your environment is, the more willpower you'll need to exert. And, unfortunately, no amount of willpower will make up for a poor environment. Therefore, you must do whatever is in your power to optimize your environment by:

surrounding yourself with inspiring people,

- absorbing knowledge of the highest caliber possible,
- designing a living and working space that work for you, not against you.
- Choose your environment carefully and deliberately.

You will raise and fall to the level of your environment.

## Lesson #2. What you believe often becomes your reality

Your mind is akin to an operating system. That system operates according to your beliefs. In other words, your beliefs largely determine what you can or cannot do. To reach your goals, you must upgrade your beliefs. Below are the three core beliefs I found the most important:

**Everything is possible.** When you assume you can, you open the doors to more possibilities. It doesn't mean things will become easier. But it does mean that you'll create more opportunities for yourself.

**Everything is learnable.** When you believe you can learn everything you need to reach any goal you have, your behavior changes. You pursue more challenging goals and acquire new skills in the process.

**Every problem has a solution.** Finally, when you believe that for every problem you face, there must be a solution, you become more resourceful.

Make these core beliefs yours. They will impact most of the beliefs you hold and enable you to make massive changes in your life over time.

Remember the following:

Poor beliefs —> ineffective actions —> no results.

Empowering beliefs —> effective actions —> good results.

Transform your beliefs about yourself and about the world and your life will change for the better.

### **Lesson #3. Your imagination is stronger than your limitations**

Human beings are the only species on earth that can use the power of imagination to visualize something that isn't there and, through focus and persistent hard work, make it a reality.

You're not the prisoner of your past, you're merely suffering from a lack of imagination.

The role of imagination is to take you into the future you want to see so that you can envision what you want. You can then come back to the present, design an action plan, and do what's necessary to close the gap between where you are and where you want to be. Thus, instead of worrying about an uncertain future, envision a compelling one. Then, start moving toward it.

You're not limited, you lack imagination.

## **Lesson #4. Consistency is more important than intensity.**

What matters most isn't what you do every other day, but what you do every day. It's the small things you do every day that matter, not the big things you do occasionally.

Your daily effort compounds over time and will inevitably lead you to incredible places you cannot yet imagine.

The problem is, people are excited at first but fail to sustain their efforts for long enough to achieve extraordinary results. They soon become bored, lose motivation, or feel hopeless when reality fails to match their expectations. As a result, they give up.

The best strategy is to fall in love with consistency.

And it usually entails lowering intensity. Working on a project a few hours a day for ten years can yield far better results than working on it fifteen hours a day for six months. Over a decade, your daily efforts will compound and put you on an exponential trajectory. But your six months of hard work probably won't.

The point is, success is seldom linear. It's exponential. And the best way to achieve exponential results is to make steady progress over a long period of time.

Slow and steady often wins the race. Consistency is far more powerful than intensity.

## Lesson #5. Self-compassion beats self-criticism

How often do you beat yourself up? And how is it working for you?

Self-criticism doesn't work. You're not an inherently lazy person who needs to be beaten with a (figurative) stick. If you're not making progress, it's usually for different reasons, whether it is lack of clarity, poor planning, or various fears. Beating yourself up won't solve these issues.

And if you see yourself as a "failure" it's because you believe "failing" is bad while, in reality, it's a necessary part of your journey toward success.

Now, what works?

Being kinder to yourself works.

Being more self-compassionate works.

In fact, learning to be self-compassionate is one of the best things you can ever do. Self-compassion acts as an emotional safety net. By talking to yourself with compassion rather than criticizing yourself, you protect your mental health.

To cultivate self-compassion, notice when you disrespect yourself. What do you tell yourself when you fail? What nasty words do you say when you make a mistake? Once you're more aware of your inner conversation, you can come up with encouraging words. Some examples would be:

- It's okay.  
I'm doing okay.  
You're doing okay \*\*\*insert your name\*\*\*  
I'm not where I want in life but I'm making progress  
I made a mistake but I'll do better next time  
How I feel now is okay. I'm just being human.  
I don't have to feel good all the time.

The simple acknowledgment that where you are and how you feel now is okay will go a long way in improving your emotional well-being. After all, that's what being human is all about. Whenever you notice that you're being harsh, interrupt your internal monologue and replace it with soothing words. Over time, being self-compassionate will become easier.