

THRIVING!

Inspirational Reminders
for Getting the Most
Out of Life

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THRIVING! Inspirational Nuggets for Getting the Most Out of Life

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By Dr. Ross Reck, the author of the Weekly Reminder



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Introduction

British writer Dr. Samuel Johnson once said, “People need to be reminded far more often than they need to be instructed.” This is especially true when it comes to getting the most out of life. We all know the things we need to do, but we still need to be reminded to do them. *Thriving!* was written to do just that—to remind us of the obvious things we need to do but often forget. Each one-page chapter of *Thriving!* contains a compelling story, an inspirational quote, a personal action plan, and a suggestion for additional reading—all designed to remind us of the obvious things we need to do to get the most out of life.

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Are You Still Relevant?

One day, as I was exiting a store, I ran into someone that I hadn't seen in quite a while. She is a former elementary school principal and had been retired several years ago. We talked for a few minutes about our kids and then she asked me if I was still writing and consulting. When I told her that I was, she said, "It must be nice to still be relevant." She then turned and walked to her car. I found myself feeling sorry for this woman. She evidently felt that since she no longer had a position of importance or a career, she was relegated to being a spectator in life rather than an active participant. As a result, she no longer felt relevant. To think this way is to miss the point regarding what life is all about. Positions and careers don't make us relevant, nor do wealth and possessions. Rather, it's doing kind things for our fellow human beings that does. And, the more kind things we do, the more relevant we are.



Inspiration

Be the reason someone believes in the goodness of people. - Karen Salmansohn

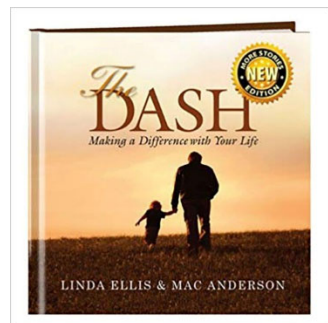
Personal Action Plan

What are some steps you can take on a daily basis to ensure that you remain an active participant in life?

Suggested Reading

[The Dash](#) by Linda Ellis and Mac Anderson

We are often remembered by the date we were born, and the date we die. But, as Linda Ellis so eloquently put it in her 1996 poem, it's really the "dash" of time in between those dates that matters most. This beautiful book of touching anecdotes about enriching our own life, and that of others, is one you won't forget and an inspiring gift for anyone from grads to retirees.



Laying the Foundation for a Meaningful Life

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, “Be Silly. Be Honest. Be Kind.” These three short sentences form the foundation for a happy and meaningful life. Be Silly tells us to relax and let our fun side take over occasionally. We need to give ourselves permission to do things like walk in the rain, splash in the



puddles and ride with the windows down while singing along with the car radio. Be Honest tells us to be comfortable with who we are and not live our lives trying to impress others. Be Kind tells us to be friendly and generous toward and thoughtful of those around us and to take the time to be someone’s rainbow when they’re having a cloudy day. Choosing to live in this manner guarantees that we’ll have a happy and fulfilling life with few regrets.

Inspiration

Be honest, be nice, be a flower not a weed. - Aaron Neville

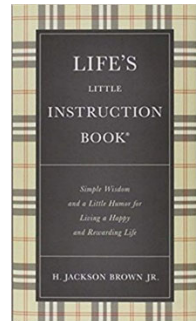
Personal Action Plan

What silly, fun thing will you do? How will you show kindness and honesty?

Suggested Reading

[Life’s Little Instruction Book](#) by H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

The Life’s Little Instruction Book series has sold more than ten million copies, spent more than two years atop the *New York Times* bestseller list, and has been translated into 33 languages. Originally written from a father to a son, the book offers insights, simple suggestions, heartfelt humor, and reminders for readers of all ages. This edition offers a new trim size and on-trend design for a new generation.



The Two Wolves that are Inside Each of Us

My friend found this story on a piece of western art. The lesson is so powerful that I felt compelled to share it with you: “One evening an old Cherokee told his grandson about a battle that goes on inside people. He said, ‘My son, the battle is between two ‘wolves’ inside us all. One is Evil. It is anger, envy, jealousy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego. The other is Good. It is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith.’ The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather: ‘Which wolf wins?’ The old Cherokee simply replied: ‘The one you feed.’”



Inspiration

Those who are happiest are those who do the most for others. - Booker T. Washington

Personal Action Plan

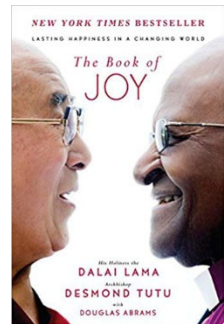
When did you last feed the good wolf? What will you do to feed it today?

Suggested Reading

[*The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World*](#)

by The Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams

Nobel Peace Prize Laureates His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu have survived more than fifty years of exile and the soul-crushing violence of oppression. Despite their hardships—or, as they would say, because of them—they are two of the most joyful people on the planet. In April 2015, Archbishop Tutu traveled to the Dalai Lama's home in Dharamsala, India, to celebrate His Holiness's eightieth birthday and to create what they hoped would be a gift for others.



Money Can't Buy Happiness or Friendship

I recently came across a review of a book about former *Tonight Show* host Johnny Carson, who was once known as the King of Late Night. During the 1970s and 1980s, he was the highest-paid entertainer in the US. The book was written by Henry Bushkin who served as Mr. Carson's personal attorney for 18 years. While Mr. Carson came across as a friendly and likable person while on camera, according to the book, he was anything but. All four of his marriages failed because of his excessive drinking and voracious womanizing. He was not a kind person, so he had no friends. In the end, he died alone at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center unhappy and worth \$450 million. The same thing happened to baseball legend Ty Cobb. He was a mean person who no one liked. And, like Johnny Carson, Mr. Cobb died alone, a very unhappy man who was worth more than \$90 million in today's dollars. To his credit, Mr. Cobb confided to someone shortly before he died, "If I had it to do over, I'd have more friends." The lesson for all of us here is that money can't buy happiness or friendship. On the other hand, being kind to our fellow human beings will bring both things to us in abundance.



Inspiration

We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give. - Winston Churchill

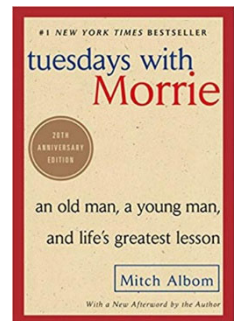
Personal Action Plan

Who do you know that needs a friend? What can you do to be a friend to that person?

Suggested Reading

[*Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, a Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson*](#) by Mitch Albom

Maybe it was a grandparent, or a teacher, or a colleague. Someone older, patient and wise, who understood you when you were young and searching, helped you see the world as a more profound place, gave you sound advice to help you make your way through it.



Growing as We Age Keeps Us Interesting

I once attended a party where someone said to me, “People don’t change much as they age unless they continue to grow.” In other words, when we stop growing, we become boring. This thought intrigued me, so I did



some checking and found there is a great deal of truth associated with it. As, singer, musician and songwriter, Loretta Lynn put it, “I don’t know what it’s like for a book writer or a doctor or a teacher as they work to get established in their jobs. But for a singer, you’ve got to continue to grow or else you’re just like last night’s cornbread—stale and dry.” So, how do we go about the business of continuing to grow? The answer is to try something new, something different—something beyond what you’ve already mastered. For example, try writing the lyrics for a song, get active in your community, cook a new dish, try a new sport, take a class at a community college, or join a club. We’re surrounded by countless opportunities for growth; all we have to do is take advantage of them. As philosopher William James once stated: “The minute a man ceases to grow, no matter what his years, that minute he begins go be old.”

Inspiration

A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new. - Albert Einstein

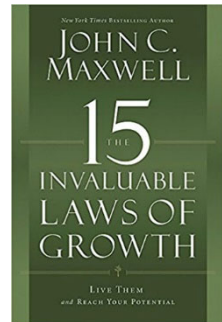
Personal Action Plan

What new things are you going to do to avoid being last night’s cornbread?

Suggested Reading

[*The 15 Invaluable Laws of Growth*](#) by John C. Maxwell

Are there tried and true principles that are always certain to help a person grow? John Maxwell says the answer is yes. He has been passionate about personal development for over fifty years, and for the first time, he teaches everything he has gleaned about what it takes to reach our potential.



How to Improve Your Luck

Janice Kaplan and Barnaby Marsh wrote an article about their new book, *How Luck Happens*, which appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*. According to the article, two of the key traits of successful people are persistence and optimism—to keep trying again and again, knowing that sooner or later one of those tries is going to succeed. As Scott Adams, creator of “Dilbert” put it, “To succeed, first you must do something. And if that doesn’t work, which can be 90% of the time, do something else. Luck finds the doers.” The lesson here is that if you just wait around for luck to happen, it probably won’t. On the other hand, if you keep trying, one day luck will come along and tap you on the shoulder.



Inspiration

I've found that luck is quite predictable. If you want more luck, take more chances. Be more active. Show up more often. - Brian Tracy

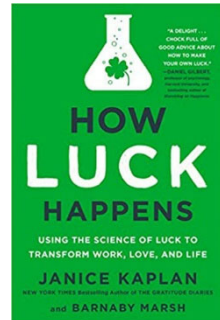
Personal Action Plan

Remember, luck finds the doers. What steps will you take to improve your luck?

Suggested Reading

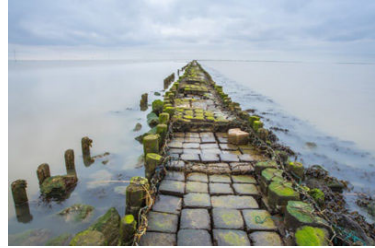
[*How Luck Happens*](#) by Janice Kaplan and Barnaby Marsh

After spending a year researching and experiencing gratitude for *The Gratitude Diaries*, Janice Kaplan is back to tackle another big, mysterious influence in all our lives: luck. And this time she's joined on her journey by coauthor Dr. Barnaby Marsh, a renowned academic who guides her exploration.



Life is a Journey and Good Friends Make the Ride Enjoyable

An article by Peggy Drexler, which appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, cited the 80-year-long Harvard Study of Adult Development which found that, "...it's not money or fame, nor possessions or looks, that lead to happiness but, rather, strong



relationships." Strong personal friendships with people we love and care about who are honest, transparent, comfortable in their own skin, and not taken with the game of "worldly one-upmanship." The problem is that most people refuse to believe this, and they spend their lives chasing fame, fortune, possessions and looks and then make themselves miserable by resenting those who appear to have more than they do. I saw a quote on Facebook that went something like: "I'm happy for people who are healthy and successful. Life is a journey, not a competition." Viewing life as a competition takes all the fun out of it and essentially guarantees we'll spend much of our time being unhappy or even miserable. Instead, choose to view life as a journey, make some friends and enjoy the ride.

Inspiration

Make new friends and keep the old. One is silver and the other gold. - Girl Scout Song

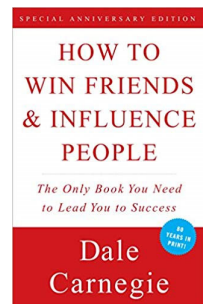
Personal Action Plan

Who are you going to reach out to from your past? Who have you met recently that you'd like to know better? Make that phone call or send that email today.

Recommended Reading

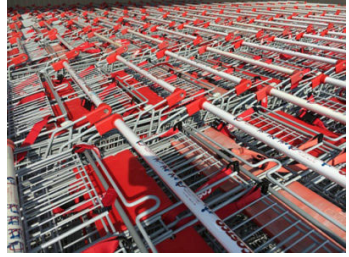
[*How to Win Friends and Influence People*](#) by Dale Carnegie

You can go after the job you want—and get it! You can take the job you have—and improve it! You can take any situation—and make it work for you!



One Thoughtful Person Can Bring Out the Kindness that's in All of Us

My wife made a trip to Costco on a Sunday afternoon to purchase, among other things, a rotisserie chicken. When she arrived at the counter where the chickens are displayed, she noticed that all the cooked chickens had already been taken. As she looked around, she saw that the rotisserie was full of chickens that were still cooking. She then



asked a Costco employee behind the counter how long it would be before the next batch of chickens would be ready. He said, “about four minutes.” She then walked over to the produce area to pick up a few things and when she returned, 11 people were lined up anxiously waiting for this employee to put the newly cooked chickens into their plastic containers and set them on the counter. This could have turned into an “every person for themselves” free-for-all. But, when the first person in line was thoughtful enough to thank the Costco employee for putting more cooked chickens on the counter, the rest of the people in line relaxed and followed suit by saying “thank you” to this employee when it was their turn to pick up their chicken. In fact, one person even invited a mother with several children to go ahead of him in the line. It’s amazing how a single kind act, by one thoughtful person, brought out the best of everyone that was in that line.

Inspiration

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around. - Leo Bascaglia

Personal Action Plan

What can you do to set a positive tone? What can you do to make sure that you’re that thoughtful person who’s ready to perform a kind act when the situation calls for it?

Suggested Reading

[How Full is Your Bucket](#) by Tom Rath and Donald O. Clifton, PhD

