

Personal Excellence

The Magazine of Personal Leadership

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April 2012



Shyalpa Tenzin Rinpoche

**Personal
Growth**

**Beauty of
Discipline**

Natural Freedom
Discover Your True Essence



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Personal Excellence

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The Magazine of Life Leadership

INSPIRATIONAL • FREEDOM

Natural Freedom

Finding joy in every breath.

by Shyalpa Tenzin Rinpoche

OUR DEEPEST ASPIRATION IS TO EXPERIENCE the richness and fullness of our being in every moment, to live fully, to recognize and realize our potential. We may think that *the surest way to fulfillment is to satisfy our desires from objects that bring us pleasure*. However, when we grasp for pleasure in hopes of finding happiness, it eludes us. For instance, ice cream, a movie, or a glass of fine wine can distort our natural quality. We may devour a chocolate bar when we feel lonely. Although we savor the taste of and momentarily feel euphoric, the lonely empty feeling soon returns. We don't experience the pure fulfillment inherent in the moment, and so we tend to use *sense pleasures* as a temporary salve.

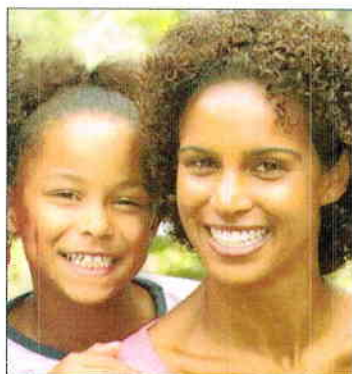
We seldom make the best use of the *leisure and opportunity* that our freedom affords. We tend to believe that *free choice* gives us the *license to indulge*. This may provide fleeting satisfaction, but *incessant pleasure-seeking is not the true way to enjoy freedom*. When we know *how to surrender*, we appreciate our freedom. The *ability to surrender* comes from a *disciplined approach to life*. We *surrender when we stop trying to satisfy all of our hopes and expectations*. We then experience *genuine freedom* that is not corrupted by *endless craving* for something better. The more conviction we gain in our inner potential, the more we surrender in this natural way, as we find *pure pleasure* in unexpected places.

Self-discipline brings confidence in our inherent wealth. It is not about making stringent demands on yourself. Fasting and praying all day aren't always necessary. Real discipline is

not punishment—it is a peaceful path to insight and understanding. Lacking such mental training, your habitual thinking gains the upper hand and imprisons you in your ordinary ways. Spiritual practice helps you leap beyond yourselves. When you sharpen your awareness, you won't become trapped in mind-numbing routines and narrow views. You open up vast reservoirs of fresh, self-renewing energy.

Protecting and defending your self-image drains you of this sacred energy.

Striving to define and validate your identity precipitates anxiety and stress. *When you know who you are, you will be content*. In each breath, you enjoy natural freedom. Your disciplined way of life becomes relaxed, and you experience inner peace and lasting happiness.



Genuine Satisfaction

You are free to do whatever you want and purchase whatever you please if you have the money. You can achieve almost anything—if you are resourceful enough. But *placing your trust in achievements that are contingent and ephemeral is like believing in a mirage*. When you rely on conditional circumstances for fulfillment, you are left feeling thirsty for more. Everything in the relative world is conditional and dependent on causes and conditions that constantly shift. So, you fool yourself when you think that achieving conditional goals will provide you lasting satisfaction. But you tend to get ensnared in your clever schemes and unwittingly waste your precious time running around in circles and maneuvering in limited, self-serving ways.

You liberate yourself from self-centeredness

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Time Well Spent

Focus on your priorities.



by Andrew J. Blum

SEND MY CHILDREN TO A wonderful school where the curriculum is rooted in the human dynamics movement and focuses on fostering creativity and developing the heart as much as the head. For my values, there's no better school; so I was shocked to learn from the principal, a capable woman, that the school struggles financially. Enrollment, she told me, is down, and if the trend continues it could shut down a wonderful school.

Given my experience, I felt I could help. When I dove in, I discovered it was not a problem with enrollment—it was a problem about focusing.

When the Principal walked into my office, she had an obvious weight on her shoulders. She told me she was glad to meet with me, but being away from the school meant she wasn't getting her job done—a parent had been waiting three days for a return call, a teacher needed help planning a field trip, a new family was interested in the school but wanted references, and she needed to document a proposed curriculum change. We agreed that her plate was full.

I asked her how things got done at the school. She told me it was chaos. Eight different committees sponsored initiatives, but accountability wasn't clearly defined. Not much got done.

I asked her to list her top three priorities. She rattled them off: 1) Increasing enrollment; 2) Building the brand; and 3) Enriching the curriculum. Finally, I asked, *What percent of time do you spend on your top priorities?* She confessed, Only 10 percent—90 percent of her time was spent on nonessential activities!

Take Four Steps

If you dedicate most of your time to activities that don't matter, you could be driving results by considering four tips:

1. Set no more than five priorities—and manage them daily. Emotionally connect to your priorities so that they drive your goals and you are invested in the outcomes. Define a long list of *No's* and a short list of *Yes's*. Have the courage to say *no*. If saying *no* has a negative stigma to you, redefine what *saying no* means so it becomes a sign of strength.

2. Make your priorities happen by saying no more than yes. Pick the three

to five things that *must get done* and *push the needle forward* and make a difference every day. *Strategy* is as much about *what you don't do* as it is about *what you do*. Say *no* to one good activity so you can say *yes* to essential and priority activities that will get the job done. Create real, meaningful priorities rooted to your goals.

3. Develop a granular action plan to support your essential priorities and define it in enough detail to weather distractions and competing new priorities. Break your actions down into small, easily approachable steps with specific owners attached so that when distraction threatens you and your team, you know the simple action that will keep you on track and get the task done. Assign accountabilities and timelines and delegate where needed. This shields you from distraction, confusion, and unne-

cessary actions. Others will soon notice your commitment to priorities—and be inspired to take similar measures.

4. Be honest with yourself about what can actually get done. Set sustainable goals. Lofty goals are rarely achievable, never sustainable, and are most often set to appeal to others. Be honest with yourself about what you can do. Assess what you have time for and what you can do.

With newfound clarity and time, the principal started focusing on priorities, delegating more, and matched committee activities to particular outcomes with clear accountabilities to make a difference in the lives of the school's children.

That's what priorities are for—getting the stuff done that matters most. PE

Andrew J. Blum is CEO and Managing Partner of the Trium Group. Email andrew.j.blum@triumgroup.com.

ACTION: Focus on your priorities.

PROFESSIONAL • PRESENCE

Personal Presence

Influence and engage with power.



by Dianna Booher

THE PERCEPTION OF personal presence dictates decisions and actions daily.

Buyers often make purchases based on the personal presence and persuasiveness of the salesperson. Negotiators with the strongest personal presence tend to walk away with the best deals. People often start—or decline—a dating relationship based on first impressions. Organizations often elect their leaders based on the power of personal presence. People size you up quickly, and change their minds slowly. So, learn how to make that fact work for you rather than against you.

• Essence of presence. We all know personal presence when we see it. Someone walks into the room, and people step aside. Heads turn. Conversation opens up to include them. When they speak, people applaud or chime in. When they ask, people answer. When they lead, people follow. When they leave, things wind down. People with presence look confident and comfortable; speak clearly and persuasively; think clearly under pressure; act with intention, reflect on their emotions, attitudes, and situations and then adapt; accept responsibility for themselves and their results; and present their genuine character authentically. What they say and do matches who they are.

• Power of presence. Presence can help

you get a date, a mate, or a sale. Presence can help you lead a meeting, movement, revolution, or nation. Presence appears in all segments of society. Presence may be used for noble purposes or selfish goals. Wherever you are and wherever you want to go, presence can help you get there. Aristotle identified three essentials of persuasive communication—a big part of presence: 1) *logical argument*, the ability to articulate your points clearly; 2) *emotion*, the ability to create or control emotion in your listeners; and 3) *character*, the ability to convey integrity and goodwill. Being a skilled communicator grants social status and influence.

• Perception of presence. You can't easily measure presence, but the label on

you often comes from other people's opinion, statement or appraisal of your presence or potential—and determines whether you get key projects and high-visibility assignments. You may be technically competent, but someone at the top may decide that you need more presence to move

up. You may be seen as "Brilliant, but not well liked—doesn't connect with people." Think of presence on a continuum, with your physical attributes, natural talents, communication skills, and character traits plotted between low presence/low impact and high presence/high impact.

You develop personal presence day by day, by presenting yourself with awareness and intention as you inch closer to your goal of strong impact. PE

Dianna Booher is CEO of Booher Consultants and author of 46 books, including *Creating Personal Presence*. Visit www.booher.com or call 800-342-6621.

ACTION: Boost your personal presence.

