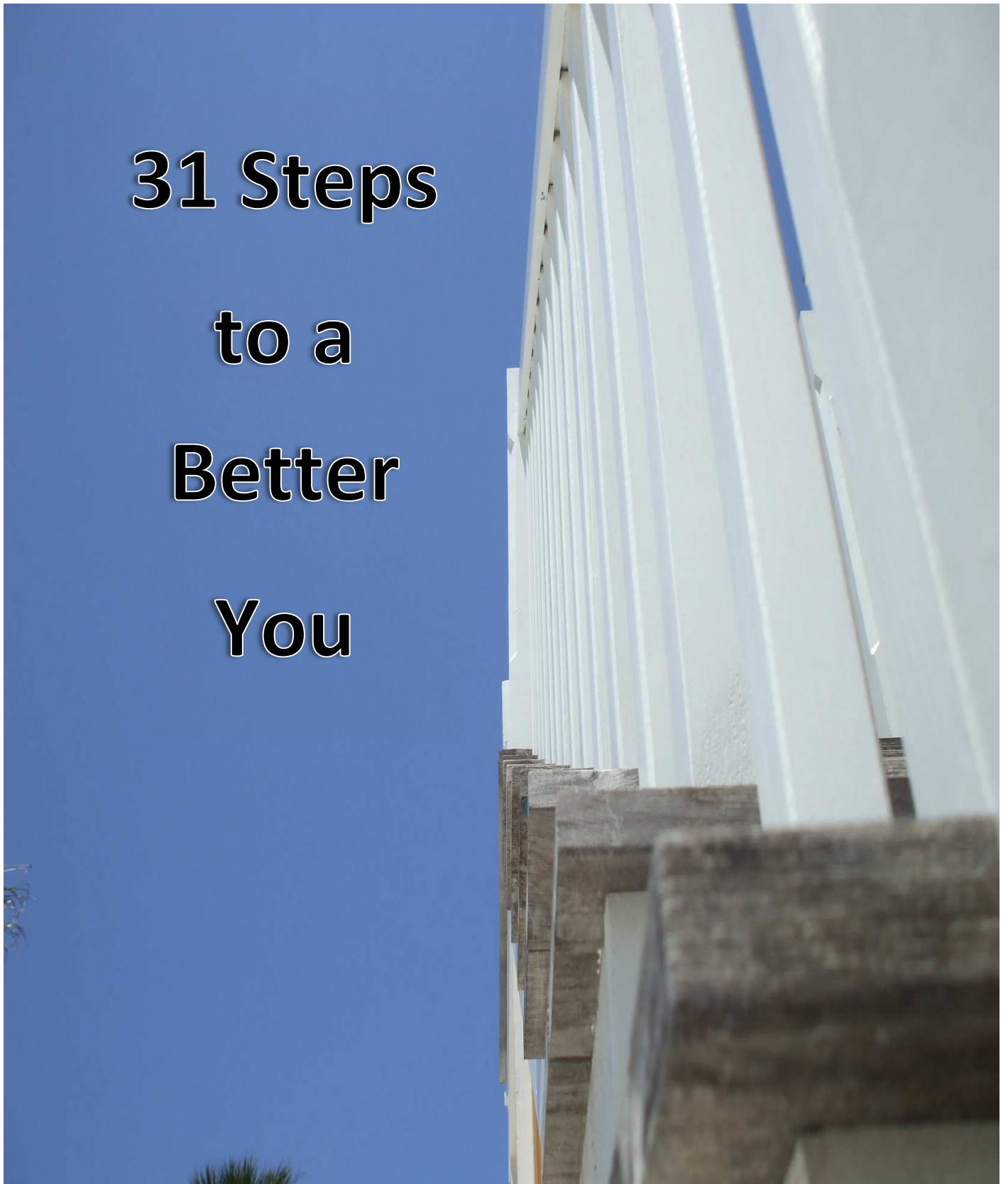


**31 Steps
to a
Better
You**



Each of us has goals. At least, we *should* have something specific that we want in the future that makes us move forward in our lives. Whether it is love, health or wealth, there is a target out there waiting for us. However, to reach those goals, we must better our lives from within, and sometimes we forget that, or we don't make time for the steps it takes to do it. Here is a series of 31 motivational suggestions that might help you start taking care of you.

31 Steps to a Better You

- 1. Live in the moment.** In our busy, gadgeted, chaotic lives, this is one of the hardest objectives to accomplish, but, in my opinion, one of the most important. Instead of rehashing the past or agonizing about the future, find happiness and fulfillment in the here and now - be present in this moment. Taste and enjoy the food you eat. Splash the water with your child at bath time. Watch a butterfly. Hold hands with your partner while watching a sunset. Genuinely laugh out loud at least once a day. When you recognize the pure joy in the little things in your life, your life will have uncompromised quality.
- 2. I double-dog dare you!** Life is more often than not about taking a chance. You can never be certain that what you do will be successful, but you can be 100% positive that doing nothing will be exactly what you get. Go for it! You will either get the results you want or you will learn from the experience for future reference.
- 3. Exercise is not a dirty word.** Couch potatoes may have eyes, but they don't see what stagnating in front of the tube is doing to their bodies and their minds. Turn off the video games and Facebook (Huh? What?! Oh no!!) for an hour and walk outside or around your apartment or do some jumping jacks in place. Just DO SOMETHING! Your life will thank you.
- 4. Be honest with yourself about everything!** It may be uncomfortable, but have a conversation with yourself in the mirror. Acknowledge what is right as well as what needs to be changed in your life. Ask yourself what you want to achieve personally, emotionally, spiritually and financially. Answer yourself honestly and you will better understand why you are where you are now and be better prepared to get where you want to be. Always be honest with yourself, because you are the only one who knows the whole truth about you.
- 5. Believe you are ready.** Ready for the next step on your personal path. Ready for the next challenge in your life. Ready to face the day head on and move forward. When you believe in yourself, nothing is impossible.
- 6. Stop the Insanity!** Pay attention to your stress level and give yourself a break. When life has gone wild, when you are at your busiest, when you feel like a tight-rope walker, give yourself permission to stop and regroup. Take five minutes, close your eyes, clear your mind as much as possible and breathe deeply and slowly from the diaphragm. This brief recess can rejuvenate your mind and body with clarity and purpose to increase your productivity.
NOTE: Don't do this while operating heavy machinery or bathing the baby.
- 7. Forgive.** Each of us has been hurt or maligned, either by decisions we have made or by the words or actions of others. The pain we feel caused by these experiences is normal. But sometimes we mentally and emotionally relive the pain over and over and refuse to let it go, which leads to more pain and anguish. Don't try to suppress the memory or erase the past - this just gives it more value. Accept it for what it is and let it go. Choose to forgive and get on with your life.
- 8. Help those around you.** It has been said, the more you give, the more you will receive - and this really does hold true. Help others in any way you can without expectations and you'll find it heals your heart, mind and soul.
- 9. Live every day with an attitude of gratitude.** Be thankful for the blessings you have - don't look for the things you don't. Yes, of course, you want to strive to better yourself and your surroundings, but in order to get what you want, you must be grateful for what you have. Henry David Thoreau said, "Wealth is the ability to fully experience life." Acknowledge just how rich you truly are.

10. **Nurture the relationships that are most important to you.** Fill your life and the lives of those you love with joy simply by telling them often how much they mean to you. You can't be everything to everyone, but practice being the best you can be for those who matter.

11. **Be yourself.** Unless you are a twin or a clone, you are unique in the Universe. Learn to love the person inside you who has ideas, strengths (and weaknesses), beauty and wisdom like no one else. Be true to yourself on your own terms and your light will shine.

12. **Build relationships with dependable, honest people who reflect your own goals and beliefs.** Surround yourself with people who show you love and respect without expectations, assumptions and conditions; and do the same for them in return.

13. **Create your own happiness.** Many people believe..."I'll be happy when I get that promotion."..."I'll be happy when I get married."..."I'll be happy when..." If you are waiting for external motivations to stimulate your happiness, you are missing the point. Find the joy in your heart and smile. It's your choice. Choose to be.

14. **Value your mistakes as stepping stones to achieving your goals.** Take risks, stumble, fall, learn and pick yourself up to start again. Thomas Edison is quoted to have said, "I have not failed. I have found 10,000 ways that don't work." Significant achievements almost always follow a long line of mistakes and failures. Keep a positive attitude, recognize the opportunity to learn and push yourself to improve.

15. **Every set of circumstances offers you two alternatives - you can react or you can respond.** Frequently, and without thinking, we have a "knee-jerk" reaction to any given situation based on fear, insecurity, anger or prejudice, and that reaction is often neither rational nor appropriate. Then you have to deal with the consequences or clean up your own mess. On the other hand, responding to an occurrence allows you to take a minute, look at the order and size of it, evaluate what just happened and make a decision based on understanding, reason, logic, experience, compassion and empathy. And - you don't look like an idiot.

16. **Be kind to yourself.** You would never allow others to speak to you the way you sometimes speak to yourself. How you treat yourself sets the standard for the way others treat you. Respect yourself.

17. **Face your problems and take action to resolve them.** They will not disappear if ignored. Problems don't define who you are, but the way you handle them reflects your fortitude. Breathe deeply and plunge forward to take the steps necessary to find a solution - and just do it!

18. **Make yourself a priority in your life.** Your needs matter. Your happiness matters. YOU matter. When you are fulfilled and your needs are met, you are much more capable of taking care of those around you. Love yourself first.

19. **Spend time with people who love and appreciate you, encourage you and who embrace who you are.** These people will empower you to be all you can be and feel more satisfied in making decisions of how you want to grow.

20. **Cheer other people's victories.** Tell those in your life what you like about them, that you are happy for their progress and you are thankful for their blessings. Tell them openly how proud you are of them. Appreciating others leads to productive, fulfilling, peaceful places in your life as well as theirs.

21. **Give life a chance.** We grow up with the ideas, ideals and values taught to us by our elders. Unfortunately, many of us don't think outside the box they built for us. We are afraid, or think it's disrespectful or worse, we remain convinced that our way is the only way. No matter how old you are, you can break free of the ties that bind and broaden your horizons. Explore and grow wings.

22. **Take a conscious step toward your goals every single day.** Most of us decide, sometimes at an early age, what we want to be "when we grow up". Some of us never grow up. But a significant number of people make a cognizant decision to consistently devote themselves to realizing their ultimate ambition. To succeed, you must take the first step...and then the second, and then keep going.
23. **Manage your thoughts because your thoughts control your life.** Each one of us is a product of the Universe. Makes no difference by what name you call the Higher Power in whom you believe, you must believe you have an Inner Power that lets you control your own quality of life, the tone of your reality and the blueprint for your future. When you take control of the thoughts that frequent your Mind, you control everything the Universe manifests in your Life.
24. **Do you hear yourself?** Seek advice from those you respect and admire, from those with more experience or education, from your elders and their wisdom. But when it comes down to the nitty gritty (wow! Did I just date myself?), you are the one who knows what's good for you. Listen to that little voice inside your head that tells you when you are about to enter where angels dare not tread or when you are traveling the right path according to your best interests. Weigh the advice, the answers and the research and then make a decision based on your heart and your inner voice(s)
25. **Concentrate on the things you can control.** Focusing your time, talent and emotions on things that are beyond your control leads to frustration and stagnation. "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."
26. **Be accountable.** Own your life, your choices and your mistakes. Acknowledge your responsibility and culpability for your perspective because you are the only one who can control the outcome. It won't be easy. You will become your biggest barrier. But believe in yourself and your ability to overcome any and all obstacles, and you will become a shining example of self-confidence, -assuredness and -esteem.
27. **Educate yourself.** I personally strive to learn something new every day, do you? There is a great big beautiful enriching world out there and all you have to do is make the effort. Don't listen to the naysayers who want you to crawl in a hole somewhere and wait for the end to come. Open your mind to new ideas. Expand your thought processes. Learn something new today!
28. **Be positive!** You must think you can do something before you can be successful at doing it. Step one: "I think I can!" Step two: Repeat step one.
29. **Be open about your feelings.** Pent up emotions can manifest in many undesirable ways, including ill effects on your health. Find someone you trust, preferably someone who will give you honest feedback, and talk about the things that trouble you. "Getting things off your chest" is a good start to mending a broken you.
30. **Challenge yourself.** Although competing against other people may be the embodiment of your natural makeup, when it comes to your personal development, it literally means nothing. Challenge yourself to be the best you can be. Strive to break your own personal records and revel in the satisfaction you feel. Soar like you mean it!
31. **Every breath we take is a blessing.** We are not guaranteed anything in this life, so it is to our advantage to make the most of every second we have. Much of our time is reserved for others, but for our own sanity and health, we should make time for ourselves. Live in gratitude and enjoy some "ME" time. You'll feel better and so will the ones who love you.

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