

How To Be Successful

(A collection of motivational insights.)

Antonio M. Parham



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tparham@alum.mit.edu

www.tkgweb.com

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Introduction

This book is a collection of inspirational thoughts, nuggets of truth, and words of wisdom from many people and experiences that have contributed to my personal and professional growth. Over the years I have given pieces of this project to family members, friends and colleagues; in one-on-one conversations, dinner table exchanges, and formal presentations.

I humbly offer you these words of motivation. May they inspire you to begin a project, encourage you to stay persistent in the midst of an endeavor, or challenge you to bring to completion whatever you have put your hands to accomplish.

My best wishes to you, as you become successful in all your endeavors.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Parkman". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tony" and last name "Parkman" clearly legible.

HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL

*Successful people are just like you.
If they can do it, you can, too.*

1. HAVE A VISION, HAVE A DREAM.
2. GET APPROPRIATE TRAINING.
3. BE WILLING TO WORK.
4. RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF
RELATIONSHIPS.
5. CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT.
6. BE A LEADER.
7. BE PERSISTENT.
8. GUARD YOUR REPUTATION.
BE A PERSON OF INTEGRITY.
9. LIFE IS UNFAIR. DEAL WITH IT.
10. GIVE BACK TO OTHERS.
11. HAVE FUN AND A SENSE OF
HUMOR.
12. REMEMBER GOD.
13. BE THE BEST!
14. BALANCE IS THE KEY TO LIFE!

Lesson 1

HAVE A VISION, HAVE A DREAM



- "If you don't know where you are going, you'll never get there."
- Be sure it is your vision.
 - *"To thine own self be true."*
- Shakespeare
 - Identify your unique talents.
- Don't limit yourself. Aim high.
 - *"Shoot for the moon, and, even if you miss, you'll land among the stars."*
- Marilyn Hughes Gaston, M.D, Assistant U.S. Surgeon General
 - *"Only he who attempts the absurd is capable of achieving the impossible."*
- Miguel de Unamuno, Spanish Philosopher

GET APPROPRIATE TRAINING



➤ EDUCATION

The 3C's

Content – The actual information taught/learned.

Contacts - Relationships which you form with classmates, faculty, alumni, coworkers, etc. Effectively expanding and leveraging your networking is a key to advancement and success.

Credentials -The usefulness/ability which a *specific* degree from a *specific* institution has in being able to “open doors” for you. (Note that, although educational degrees and credentials do have the ability to open doors for you, it is up to you as to what to do after you get through the door.)

➤ EXPERIENCE

Get experience that pertains to your goals, even if you have to work as a volunteer initially. Academic understanding alone (“book knowledge”) is inadequate.

Gain skills in *multiple* areas

A person with multiple skills is more rounded, has better perspectives and is much more marketable. Such a person understands all of the different functional areas of an organization or a system, and knows their interdependencies and interactions. This is especially important given the rapidly changing nature of our economy.

Especially consider adding business (MBA, etc.) and/or legal (J.D., etc.) training to your skill portfolio. Every organization is a business, regardless of whether it is a for-profit or not-for-profit business, technical or non-technical. Understanding business and legal implications of decisions is always key.

- *"It's a humbling experience for technologists to discover you can make a lot more money on a pager by just changing [its color]."*
- George Fisher, former CEO, Motorola, then became CEO of Kodak

The “soft” stuff is the hard stuff!

An important component of success is mastery of the “soft” skills. “Hard” skills focus on technical, analytical and physical aspects. “Soft” skills focus on how to interact effectively with people.

Soft skills include things such as:

- Motivation/inspiration
- Leadership
- Organizational behavior
- Politics
- Negotiation and persuasion
- Writing
- Presentations/public speaking
- Interviews
- Sales
- Etc.

Strive to get formal training on these topics and solicit coaching from those who are skillful.

Learning is a **life-long** job

You are never “done” in regards to learning. Do regular self-assessments and seek to be someone who strives for continuous improvement.

➤ EDUCATION + EXPERIENCE =
PREPAREDNESS

- *"It is better to be prepared and never get the opportunity, than to get an opportunity and not be prepared."*
- Remember "The 5Ps: *Prior preparation prevents poor performance.*"

Lesson 3

BE WILLING TO WORK



- *"The dictionary is the only place where success comes before work."*
-Vince Lombardi
- *"Genius is 2 percent inspiration and 98 percent perspiration."*
- Thomas Alva Edison
- *"Determination" without "Discipline" is "Dreaming."*
- "Discipline is doing what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, whether you feel like doing it or not."
- "Talent" plus work plus training plus discipline = "**skill.**" (Talent, in and of itself, is insufficient, and almost irrelevant.)
- Remember: "**deferred gratification**" is required for anything worthwhile. This means endurance of short term "pain" for long term gain.

Lesson 4

RECOGNIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIPS



Relationships can be loosely categorized into three types:

1. Contacts (casual)
2. Acquaintances (well known)
3. Friends (best known, committed)

Each type of friendship is important for success. For example, the best jobseekers find good jobs by knowing how to **network** effectively among even casual contacts. Corporations themselves are ineffective without having strong business relationships and partnerships with other complementary organizations.

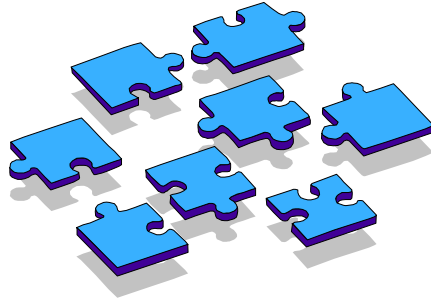
In your personal life, recognize each relationship for what it is. And ensure that you maintain true friendships throughout life.

- *"Hold on to friends with both hands."*

- African Proverb

Lesson 5

CHANGE IS THE ONLY CONSTANT



- *"Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans."*
- John Lennon, 1980
- *"Prediction is very difficult, especially concerning the future,"*
- President Gerald Ford
- *"There are two types of forecasters: Those who don't know, and those who don't know they don't know."*
- John Kenneth Galbraith, economist
- *"The secret of my success is that I do not concern myself with where the puck is. I concern myself with where the puck **WILL** be, and I make sure I am where the puck will be"*.*
- Wayne Gretzky, hockey superstar
- *"May you live in interesting times."*
- Chinese curse

There are several aspects of change that you should be aware of:

A. The Market changes

- Mastery of a topic or a skill may be good for a given point in time, but as a market evolves, skills knowledge strategies must be updated accordingly.

B. YOU change.

- As you age and mature (physically, emotionally and spiritually) your priorities will change. Reevaluating goals from time to time is essential.

C. You will probably have several careers.

- For many people, the days of one, lifelong career are gone. Most of us will likely have several careers during the course of our life as we adapt to changes in the markets and in ourselves.

Lesson 6
BE A LEADER



- *"Wise is the man who realizes early in life that what he can do by himself is relatively small. A man's success is determined, in large measure, by what he is able to get other people to do."*
- Lee S. Bickmore, Chairman of the Board, Nabisco,
- *"Leaders are those whom others follow."*
- Bill Gore, founder of W.L. Gore & Associates of Newark, Delaware; manufacturer of Gore-Tex
- *"A good leader knows the way, shows the way and goes the way."*

Don't confuse "leadership" with "management":

- Management: Control mechanisms to compare system behavior with the plan and take action when a deviation is detected.

Leadership: Achieving grand visions. Motivation and inspiration to energize people, not by pushing them in the right direction as control mechanisms do, but by satisfying basic human needs for achievement, a sense of belonging, recognition, self-esteem, a feeling of control over one's life, and the ability to live up to one's ideals. Such feelings touch us deeply and elicit a powerful response.

- John P. Kotter, Professor of organizational behavior at the Harvard Business School

- "Leadership is the art of accomplishing more than the science of management says is possible. "

- Colin Powell

Lesson 7

BE PERSISTENT



- *"There is no failure, except in no longer trying."*
- *"Winners never quit, and quitters never win."*
- *"I get up when I fall down."*
 - Paul Harvey (journalist & commentator), on the secret of his success.
- *"They won. We lost. Next."*
 - Barry Diller, CEO, QVC Network, Inc., summarizing the battle between QVC and Viacom to acquire Paramount, Wall Street Journal, 2/16/94

- *"Don't give in, don't give up and don't give out."*
 - Advice given (as a child) to Marilyn Hughes Gaston, M.D., Asst. Surgeon General, by her mother. Related 3/26/94, Biomedical Science Careers Conference, Boston Park Plaza Hotel
- *"If a task is once begun, never leave it 'till it's done. Be the labor great or small, do it well or not at all."*
- *"Timing is everything."*

Success is sometimes the function of being in the right place at the right time. If you quit on the 99th try, you may miss the success which is coming on your 100th attempt.

The following example of perseverance from Bits & Pieces magazine is poignant:

It's a rare person who doesn't get discouraged. Whether it happens to us or to an associate we're trying to cheer up, the answer centers around one word: perseverance.

The value of courage, persistence and perseverance has rarely been illustrated more convincingly than in the life story of this US citizen:

Age--Event

22--Failed in business

23--Ran for Legislature: defeated

24--Again failed in business

25--Elected to Legislature

26--Sweetheart died

27--Had a nervous breakdown

29--Defeated for Speaker

31--Defeated for Elector

34--Defeated for Congress

37--Elected to Congress

39--Defeated for Congress

46--Defeated for Senate

47--Defeated for Vice-President

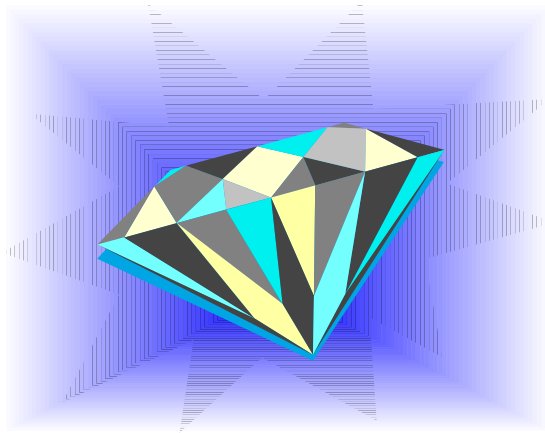
56--Died

51--Elected President of the United States of America

That's the record of Abraham Lincoln.

Lesson 8

**GUARD YOUR REPUTATION.
BE A PERSON OF INTEGRITY**



- *"A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than gold or silver."*
- Bible, Proverbs 22:1
- *"If one's reputation is a possession, then of all my possessions, my reputation means most to me. Nothing comes even close to it in importance."*
- Arthur Ashe, opening sentences in his autobiography, Days of Grace.
- *"It's better to die with a good name than to live with a bad one."*
- *"Take care of your character and your reputation will take care of itself."*

- *"Your reputation is the most important part of building your career. It is worth more than brilliance, skills or expertise. Someone with a reputation as a caring, dependable person, who can get things done (and do so with integrity and fairness) will surely go far." **
 - Wayne Budd, attorney, executive.
 (Related Nov, 1993 at a Partnership Forum in Boston.)
- *"I desire to conduct the affairs of this administration [such] that if, at the end, when I lay down the reins of power, I have lost every other friend on earth, I shall at least have one friend left, and that friend shall be down inside of me."*
 - Abraham Lincoln
- *"Trust is the non-negotiable currency for effective relationships."*
 - Life@Work Magazine, March 2000.

Once you break or lose trust, it is difficult (and sometimes impossible) to re-establish credibility. Others may always be wondering (in an unspoken manner) “Will it happen again?” They may put in “safeguards” to doublecheck your actions and to protect against further breakdowns. This may slow progress towards your goals.

Rest assured, your dirty little secrets will always come to light -- often at the most inopportune time (like when you finally are about to reach your desired pinnacle).

Even presidents of the United States of America, the most powerful country of our time, were unable to use the vast power of their office to keep many of their indiscretions hidden.

Jesus said, “There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known.” (Mt 10.26, NIV)

Lesson 9

LIFE IS UNFAIR. DEAL WITH IT



The Bible says that God “gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and on the unjust, too.” (Mt 5:45, NLT)

Example: Arthur Ashe (African-American tennis superstar, US Davis Cup team coach, member of board of directors of several prominent firms), contracted AIDS in a coronary bypass surgery. The disease was ultimately fatal.

Prior to his death, a People Magazine reporter, "groping for right words to express her sympathy" after interviewing Arthur Ashe regarding AIDS' impact on his life, initiated the following dialogue:

Q: "Mr. Ashe, I guess [coping with AIDS] must have been the heaviest burden you have ever had to bear, isn't it?"

A: "No...Race has always been my biggest burden. Having to live as a minority in America. Even now it continues to feel like an extra weight tied around me."

- Arthur Ashe, Days of Grace, p126.

You probably will have unfair obstacles. If race is one of the problems you encounter, deal with it. To be considered equal, you may often have to be twice as smart, be twice as educated and work twice as hard as the majority. (But, fortunately, this is usually not too difficult to do!)

Don't waste time complaining:

- *"When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!"*
- *"Bloom where you are planted."*
- *"Some people complain because God put thorns on roses, while others praise Him for putting roses among thorns."*
- *"If I were to say 'God why me?' about the bad things, then I should have said, 'God why me?' about the good things that happened in my life."*

- Arthur Ashe, Days of Grace

GIVE BACK TO OTHERS



Your “posture” should always be this:
One hand reaching up to climb the next rung
in the “ladder” towards your goal in the
fulfillment of your life's “call” / “Purpose,”
while the other hand is reaching down to
help others climb up to your level.

You should give of both your time and your
money to help others and your community.

It is often most effective to target an un-
addressed need which may not be as trendy
or popular as other “causes.” By targeting
an over-looked but deserving niche, your
contributions can make the most difference.

Lesson 11

HAVE FUN AND A SENSE OF HUMOR



- *"Humor is to life what shock absorbers are to automobiles."*
- *"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy."*
- Nursery rhyme
- *"Laughter can relieve tension, soothe the pain of disappointment, and strengthen the spirit for the formidable tasks that always lie ahead."*
- Dwight D. Eisenhower
- *"A cheerful heart is good medicine but a crushed spirit dries up the bones".*
- Bible, Proverbs 17:22

Lesson 12

REMEMBER GOD



- *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but fools despise wisdom and instruction."*
- Bible, Proverbs 1:7
- *"There is a God-shaped void in the heart of every person which can only be filled by God himself."*
- Blaise Pascal, famous inventor, mathematician, philosopher. Invented the bus (his was a horse drawn "people-mover"). Invented one of the first digital [mechanical] calculators in 1642. Eponym of the Pascal triangle, Pascal's law of pressure and of Nicklaus Wirth's 1970 Pascal programming language.
- *"Surely there is a God."*
- Watson & Crick, on their discovery of DNA.
- *TIP: "The more you know, the more you know you don't know."*

Tony Parham's corollary: *If you think you know everything, you don't know much.*

- *"We don't know one millionth of one percent about anything."*
- Thomas Alva Edison

Lesson 13
BE THE BEST!



- *"Do you see a man skilled in his work?
He will serve before kings; he will not
serve before obscure men."*
- Bible, Proverbs 22.29

- *"My parents always told me that people
will never know how long it takes you to
do something. They will only know how
well it is done."*
- Nancy Hanks
Nancy Hanks was born in Virginia in 1784. Her
family later moved to Kentucky where, on June 12,
1806, she married Thomas Lincoln. She gave birth to
three children: Sarah (February 10, 1807), Thomas
(1812), who died in infancy, and Abraham (February
12, 1809), who later became America's 16th president.

- *"The difference between ordinary and
extraordinary is that little extra."*

"And somehow you must decide early to do your job so well that nobody could do it better. Do it so well that the living, the dead, or the unborn could do it no better. Do it as if God Almighty called you at this particular moment in history to do it, and no matter how small you consider it, do it well. If it befalls your lot to be a street sweeper, sweep streets like Michelangelo carved marble; sweep streets like Raphael painted pictures; sweep streets like Beethoven composed music; sweep streets like Shakespeare wrote poetry; sweep streets so well that all the host of heaven and earth will have to pause and say there lived the great street sweeper who swept his job well!

"If you can't be a pine on the top of the hill be a shrub in the valley, but be the best shrub on the side of the hill; be a bush if you can't be a tree; if you can't be a highway just be a trail; if you can't be a song, be a star.

It isn't by any size that you win or you fail. Be the best of whatever you are."

- Excerpts from "Facing the Challenge of a New Age" a speech delivered by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the Commencement Convocation at Kentucky State College, June 2, 1957.

Lesson 14

BALANCE IS THE KEY TO LIFE!



It is relatively easy to excel in any one particular dimension.

The challenge (and the imperative!) is to ensure that all facets of our lives are superlative (including finances, career, education, community responsibilities, friendships, family, relationships, spirituality, physical health, nutrition, exercise, rest, recreation, etc.).

A key to being able to achieve balance is being skilled at effective time management.

The “10D’s” of Effective Time Management

1) **Delegate** - Keep for yourself only the most critical, un-delegatable tasks.

2) **Delete** – Eliminate unnecessary and lower priority tasks.

3) **Delay** - Which task(s) can be done at a later time?

4) **Disguise** - “Morph” a task into something else, such that something you are already doing can cover it.

5) **Double-Up** - Do several things simultaneously.

6) **Dissect** - Of the many different tasks which face you, usually a small number are the most vital. Focus the bulk of your effort on those. Some call this “the art of selective neglect,” since you often must neglect lower priority things to spend your time on higher priority areas.

7) **Diagnose** -

a) Do the correct planning and preparation.

b) Determine, prepare and use the correct tools:

- If the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem begins to look like a nail.

- Abe Lincoln said, "If I had six hours to chop down a tree, I'd spend the first four hours sharpening the axe."

8) **Design** - Proactively design procedures and systems which will allow you to regularly monitor and maintain key areas.

a) Multiple topics can be covered time-effectively in crisp, regularly scheduled update meetings.

b) People won't feel the need to interact with you immediately regarding a non-urgent topic if they know a regularly occurring meeting is happening soon where this can be addressed.

c) Staying on top of situations (preventive maintenance) avoids the creation of bigger (time- and resource-demanding) problems down the road.

d) Helps you to make wiser and more informed decisions. (Today's problems and time-drains are often caused by poor solutions to yesterday's problems.)

9) **Dial in to the divine (i.e. "Pray!")**

GUIDE: Prayer helps you obtain direction. Getting direction helps you to prioritize correctly. (*"You become effective by being selective."* - Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life*)

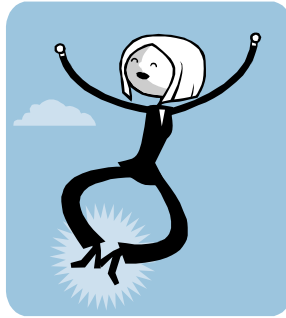
PROVIDE: Prayer moves the hand of God on your behalf.

10) Discipline - Knowing what to do (re: the above items) is inadequate. You must also do it -- consistently. **Discipline is doing what needs to be done, when it needs to be done, whether you feel like it or not.**

Proper **prioritization** is a key prerequisite to effective use of the above techniques. For example, you must be able to differentiate between “urgent” and “important.”

Urgency may indicate that something is time sensitive with an impending deadline. However, just because it has the most pressing deadline, does not mean that it is the most important thing to do. You may need to miss today’s deadline for Project A, because Project B (due tomorrow) is more important.

Success!



A poem by Ralph Waldo Emerson:

Success

To laugh often and much;

*To win the respect of intelligent people and
the affection of children;*

*To earn the appreciation of honest critics
and endure the betrayal of false friends;*

*To appreciate beauty, to find the best in
others;*

*To leave the world a bit better, whether by a
healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed
social condition;*

*To know even one life has breathed easier
because you have lived.*

This is to have succeeded.

About the Author

Antonio M. Parham ("Tony") is the founder of The Koinonia Group (TKG), which provides a variety of management-consulting services, drawing upon the staff's decades of experience working with some of the world's most successful for-profit and not-for-profit organizations. "Koinonia" (pronounced coin-nuh-NEE-ya) is a Greek word meaning "joined together for a common purpose." More information about TKG can be found at www.tkgweb.com.

Earlier in his career, Tony worked as a manager, engineer or executive at a variety of firms, including: AT&T, Bell Telephone Laboratories, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Lotus Development Corporation, New Covenant Christian Center and Softrend.

Tony was founding Co-Chair of the IBM Massachusetts Diversity Council and is Chairman of the Board of Directors for Axiom Entertainment Group (www.axiomrecords.com). Tony has served on the Boards of several not-for-profits, including the Mattapan Community Health Center, New Creations Christian School (Richmond, Indiana), Wellesley ABC (A Better Chance) and Jubilee Christian Church (www.jubileecci.org).

Tony holds an M.S. in Management from the MIT Sloan School of Management (designated as Seley Scholar: Sloan's highest honor), is on the Board of Sloan's Not-for-Profit Internship Fund, has served as a member of Sloan's Board of Governors and has been a frequent guest lecturer in their marketing department and in various school-wide forums. Tony has also earned an M.S. in Computer Science from the University of Southern California and a B.S. in Computer Science from MIT.

Tony is originally from Baltimore, Maryland and is married to Dr. Lynda Morris Parham, a clinical psychologist who provides services to adults, adolescents, couples and families (www.DrLynda.org). The couple has 3 children and lives in Boston.