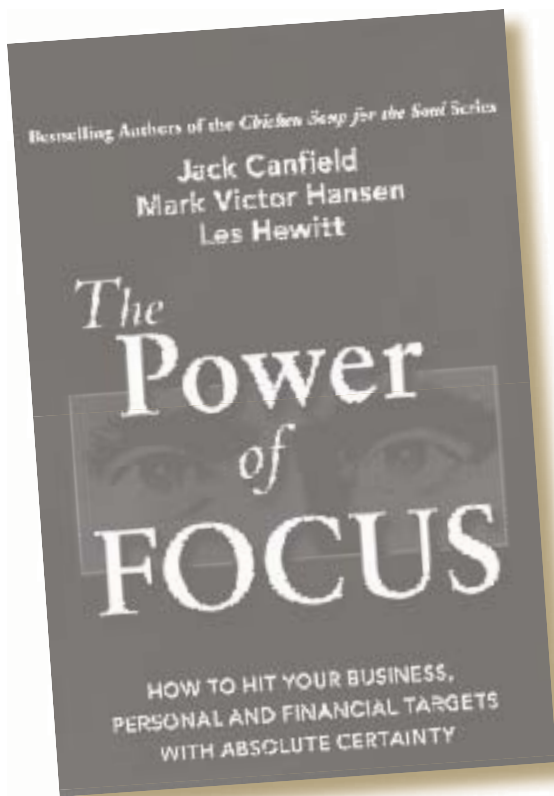




# THE POWER OF FOCUS

– Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen



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How to hit your Business, Personal and Financial targets with absolute certainty.

From the bestselling authors of the Chicken Soup for the Soul series, comes a book that will enrich your life in every way. It's a book with a difference, powerful but down-to-earth. Discover The Power of Focus.

So many find it difficult to focus. There's no spark, work isn't fulfilling and they've lost sight of the lofty goals that once inspired them, if they had any goals at all. Do you have trouble focusing? Are you constantly being distracted? Is it difficult to find the balance between work, family and recreation?

In this summary, you will learn Ten Focusing Strategies that will enable you to focus every area of your life. Topics include:

- Conquering Bad Habits
- Discovering Your Areas of Brilliance
- Building Excellence in Relationships
- Creating Optimum Balance
- Living with Purpose
- And more...

How do we know these strategies work? The authors have taught these principles to thousands of their clients, with spectacular results. If you live these strategies, they give their personal guarantee that not only will you hit your goals with pinpoint accuracy – you will exceed them.

It's not Hocus-Pocus it's all about Focus

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen are best known for authoring the Chicken Soup for the Soul series, which has sold over 50 million copies worldwide

Les Hewitt is one of the top performance coaches in the United States.

### 1. YOUR HABITS WILL DETERMINE YOUR FUTURE

You are what you do. We are all creatures of habit. Research has shown that 90 percent of human behaviour is based on habit. Which habits are holding you back, hindering your goals and perhaps even harming your relationships? What wouldn't you give to change them? What are your success habits and how can you develop more? If you change your habits, you will change your future.

#### How to change bad habits

- Study successful role models

Many people don't believe it, but successful people are often happy to share their ideas. Track them down and interview them. Take them out to lunch and ask questions about how they became successful. What are their success habits? You'll be amazed what you can discover if you just ask.

Another way to study successful people is simply to read their biographies or autobiographies. Libraries are full of them. You can study the habits of some of the most successful people in your industry – even the world – anytime you like.

To make it even easier, many of these successful people produce audiotapes, so you don't even have to read the book. You can listen to it in the car, while walking, jogging etc.

Remember: the book you don't read won't help.

- Develop the habit of changing your habits

You never stop learning. Always strive to improve, even if the change is marginal. Life will continue to throw challenges at you no matter how many you overcome, so be patient. Even if you have replaced all your bad habits with good ones, there is still plenty of work to be done.

Understand the consequences of your actions and think about who you want to be before choosing which new habits to develop.

#### The successful habits formula

Here are three steps to forming successful habits:

1. Clearly identify your bad or unproductive habits

Reflect upon and describe in writing the long-term consequences of your bad habits. Don't just think about the

daily results, often the effects of bad habits don't surface for years. Like Brent Vouri, your life may be at stake.

2. Define your new successful habit

Now describe the daily and long-term rewards of your new, productive habit. Be as vivid as you can in describing all the good that will come.

3. Create a three-part action plan

Write down three solid steps that will assist you to develop the new habit. For example, if your new habit was to be on time, this list could include trying to be at meetings ten minutes early, taking a time management course, hiring a personal assistant etc.

#### Developing successful habits takes time

The longer a habit has been in place, the harder it will be to change. If you have been smoking twenty cigarettes a day for the last twenty years, it is unlikely that you will completely

overcome the habit in a week. Have patience and ignore minor setbacks.

Focus on your progress, not your failures. The good news is that once you have changed a habit, this becomes your new behaviour – good habits are just as hard to break as bad habits!

### THE POWER OF HABITS

After being in a coma for fifteen days, subsequently losing forty pounds and then not being able to speak for two weeks, Brent Vouri realised he'd been making the wrong choices for a long time. Destructive tobacco, alcohol and other drug habits had nearly ended his life. It was time to change.

He began with a goal to simply improve his health with some aerobics classes. In three years, he was teaching them. Later, he competed in the National Aerobics championships, completed a university degree and then started his own sporting wear business.

Today, Typhoon Sports Ltd. is a multi-million dollar company supplying high-profile clients such as Nike. How did Brent do it? Just as bad habits put him on a downward spiral to destruction, even death; the cultivation of good, successful habits put him on an upward spiral to success.

### 2. IT'S NOT HOCUS-POCUS, IT'S ALL ABOUT FOCUS

#### The entrepreneurs dilemma

An entrepreneur has a great idea for a new product or service that will make lots of money. He starts his business, initially focusing on building and retaining his customer

base. He makes decent profits and the business grows.

It's exciting, but soon he becomes increasingly bogged down in administrative affairs. He's not good at delegation and won't hand control of these administrative tasks to someone else. The fire in him begins to die as the business turns into a daily routine. This story is all too common.

The answer: focus most of your time on the things you do brilliantly. Delegate the rest.

### **Discover your brilliance**

What do you do effortlessly? What skill do you have that other people marvel at? Is there a market for your unique talents? First, you need to differentiate your areas of brilliance from your weaknesses.

Make a list of all the things you do well and rate them on a scale of one to ten (one for weakest, ten for strongest). The ones that score a ten will be the talents, skills or attributes that bring you the greatest rewards. Your areas of brilliance.

Now make a list of your typical weekly activities. If necessary, jot down every fifteen minutes what you are doing. In a few days, you'll be able to see exactly where all your time is going. How much time are you spending on the things you do best?

For many, the answer is between 15 and 25 percent. What if you were to change this to 80 – 90 percent? How would this affect your health, wealth and happiness?

### **If you're feeling swamped, get help!**

Hire an effective, dedicated personal assistant to take care of the many administrative tasks that distract you.

A personal assistant is not a secretary. Your assistant's duty is to keep you focused on what you do brilliantly.

They organise not only your time, but also your associations. You will be able to focus on the tasks – and the people – that are most important.

### **The 4-D solution**

Here are four steps to help you focus when something else, such as a phone call, fax, e-mail or even employee, tries to divert your attention:

1. Dump It. Be strong. Learn to say 'No'.
2. Delegate It. It's an important task, but someone else can do it. Don't feel guilty, just hand it over.
3. Defer It. You need to do this, but not right away. Schedule another time to complete it.
4. Do It. The task is urgent and you need to do it now.

Start immediately and give yourself a reward when you have finished.

### **3. DO YOU SEE THE BIG PICTURE?**

It's easy to lose sight of your goals. Sometimes we're so busy we can't see the big picture anymore. Schedule time to think. Make it a priority. Develop unusual clarity – a crystal-clear picture of what you want - so that you can re-focus and look at things in perspective.

### **The Top-10 Goals Checklist**

If you're finding it difficult to focus on your goals, here is a wonderful checklist that will help you set, or re-set goals that will last the distance.

1. Your most important goals must be yours.

It sounds obvious, but don't let the media, parents, friends or neighbours set your goals. Make sure your goals are what you really want.

2. Your goals must be meaningful.

If your goal isn't meaningful it won't last the distance. What are you willing to give up to achieve this goal? You can guarantee there will be sacrifices along the way. Your goals should be what drive you to get up in the morning – even when you don't feel like it.

3. Your goals must be specific and measurable.

Accurately define what you want. The more specific the better. If your goal is to be financially independent, define what that means. Does it mean having \$50 million in the bank, being debt free etc. Be more specific.

4. Your goals must be flexible.

On the road to achieve your goals, other opportunities may arise. You don't need to try every new idea, but be open to genuine opportunities.

5. Your goals must be challenging and exciting.

Think big. Your goals should be so exciting they keep you up at night. They don't have to be epic, like climbing Mt. Everest (unless that's what you want), but they shouldn't be mediocre.

6. Your goals must be in alignment with your values.

If your goals are in alignment with your values, achieving them becomes easier. There will be no internal conflict and this combined energy will propel you to greater success.

7. Your goals must be well balanced.

When people in their eighties are asked what they would do differently if they could live their lives again, they never say, 'I'd spend more time at the office.'

Set goals that include the more pleasant things of life such as family time, recreation, travel and hobbies.

8. Your goals must be realistic.

If you're four feet tall, it's unlikely you'll play professional basketball. Set goals that are challenging, but achievable, and give yourself enough time to complete them.

9. Your goals must include contribution.

Many just set monetary goals and don't leave any room for giving. Remember to also set goals that give something back. This contribution can take many forms, but the payback is guaranteed, though it often comes in unexpected ways.

10. Your goals need to be supported.

You'll need some help along the way. You have three options:

- a) Tell the world – lots of pressure, but it works for some.
- b) Don't tell anyone – actions speak louder than words.
- c) Tell a select few people whom you trust and who will support you (recommended).

When you find it difficult to focus on your goals, then it's time to refocus. The next strategy will help you do this daily.

#### 4. CREATING OPTIMUM BALANCE

Wouldn't it be wonderful if instead of constantly juggling family, work and recreation time – and feeling guilty no matter which you put first – you could find the right balance. Here's how.

##### **The B-Alert system**

B is for Blueprint

Make a blueprint of the day; a map of what you want to accomplish. Do it the night before or early in the morning. If you plan the night before, research has indicated that your unconscious mind will actually be working out how to fulfil your plans! Either way, with your day already mapped out before you begin, you will have a tremendous feeling of confidence and reduced stress.

A is for Action

There is a difference between being busy and taking well planned action. You can be busy all day and not accomplish anything. Remember The Big Picture.

Spend your time on what you do best. If you're getting distracted, remember the 4-D solution: Dump, Delegate, Defer or Do it.

L is for Learning

An important part of every day is learning, although this

doesn't mean you have to attend a university lecture. Consider the following:

- Try to begin each day by reading for thirty minutes. Read only uplifting material, such as biographies and autobiographies of successful people. Avoid negative portions of news that will only depress you before the day has even begun.
- Read book summaries!
- Listen to motivational audiotapes in the car, rather than the radio.
- Watch informative and intellectually stimulating television documentaries.
- Learn from yourself. Analyse daily and past successes.

E is for Exercise

Don't groan. Twenty minutes a day will do. The results are spectacular. George Burns, the famous comedian who lived to be a 100 years old, said the secret to his longevity was daily stretching for fifteen minutes.

A good routine would be thirty minutes per day, which includes stretching time. This time could also include walking, swimming or any other kind of exercise you prefer.

R is for Relaxing

It may sound strange, but regularly relaxing will make you more productive. Everyday, take a TPM (Twenty-five Peaceful Minutes), which is basically a short nap. Do it anywhere you can: the office, the car, somewhere that will be quiet and where you won't be disturbed.

This will help to alleviate the daily 'sag' and will rejuvenate both your body and mind.

Aside from a daily siesta, schedule regular time off. During this time, your specific action is to have 100 percent fun. Don't feel guilty and don't do anything work related. Switch off the mobile phone and don't check your email. Some business people can't grasp this concept.

Take time off to enjoy life. In terms of work, you'll recharge your batteries, clear your head and your productivity will actually increase.

T is for Thinking

This is reflective thinking. At the end of the day, review it. How did you do? What could you have improved? If you made mistakes, don't beat yourself up. Learn, and do better tomorrow. Daily reflection will produce weekly, monthly and yearly benefits.

This system may seem to defeat its own purpose. However, your time will be more effectively used and you will make more money doing less while also having plenty of time off for family and recreation.

Your life will be balanced. In addition, you don't have to do all these steps in order. They're quite flexible.

Why not exercise while listening to a motivational tape?

Adapt the system to your personal situation.

## 5. BUILDING EXCELLENT RELATIONSHIPS

### The Double Spiral

Look at relationships as a spiral that can go upward or downward. These principles apply to both business and personal relationships.

#### Understanding the Downward Spiral

Have you had a relationship fall apart? Analyse and write down what happened,

step-by-step. What went wrong? If you can't learn what destroyed the relationship, there's a good chance it will happen again.

Some common starting points for the downward spiral are lack of communication, dishonesty, unfulfilled promises and financial problems. If you can see a relationship beginning a downward spiral, you may be able to set things right or at least stop it from happening again.

#### Understanding the Upward Spiral

Now analyse a relationship that flourished. What did you do to make it grow? The list probably includes giving, trust, common goals, consistent support, keeping promises and good communication.

Just like a downward spiral slowly gathers momentum until it spins out of control, an upward spiral gathers momentum until it produces many rich, varied and sometimes unexpected rewards. Understanding the upward spiral can help you save, build upon and forge new relationships.

#### Core Clients and the Double Win

Lets look at one of your most important business relationships: your core clients. This is a win-win relationship. They generate the most revenue, give you the most referrals and your business basically depends on them.

But our research has shown that most businesses spend very little time with them. What could you do to strengthen your relationship with them? You could:

- a) Look for ways to improve your service
- b) Offer discounts, some free product etc
- c) Take them out to lunch and ask if there's any way you could improve your service (also a good opportunity to get to know them personally)
- d) All of the above

The business rewards for doing this include increased revenue, more referrals and a possible friendship outside

work, all of which will mean that your client will be far less likely to move to a competitor.

### Personal relationships

Are you spending enough time in your most important personal relationships, such as family, friends and mentors? If not, then who's taking up all the time? It's time to say 'No' to these people who aren't at the top of your relationships list. Protect this precious time with the most important people in your life.

## 6. THE CONFIDENCE FACTOR

Confidence is not often thought of as a habit. But it is. A habit that you can develop, hone and strengthen, on a daily basis.

Don't expect not to encounter fear, worry or uncertainty – they are a part of life. In the absence of confidence, they take control, hindering progress. With confidence, these forces can be overcome. In the end, confidence is a combination of positive attitude and positive action. Both of these involve the power of choice. It is up to you to choose daily to think more positively and take positive action.

### Resolve Unfinished Business

This means any mess in your life that has not been cleared up, be it financial, legal, career, relationship or health. Often these messes are not faced out of fear. Fear leads to doubt and corrodes your confidence, creating a vicious cycle.

Confronting the issue may be uncomfortable and risky. Here is a phrase to help: Step into your fear. Most of the time, it is all in your mind.

Living in fear takes an enormous amount of energy. Clear up your unfinished business, then move on. Do this regularly. As issues arise, deal with them with confidence. Enjoy the energy boost that comes with an uncluttered life.

A fire fighter gave this description. 'Fire fighters deal with fear every time they prepare to enter a burning building... An incredible transformation takes place as soon as they go inside the building. They literally step into the fear, and because they do, the fear disappears... By confronting their fear, they can focus on the immediate situation and get the job done.'

### FORGIVE AND FORGET

To fully release yourself from the baggage of the past, you must also learn to forgive.

First, you need to forgive people who have undermined

you in the past, regardless of how serious the situation. This is essential for peace of mind and future happiness. Write a letter, phone; find some way to settle the issue for yourself, and then move on.

Second, forgive yourself. You cannot change the past. Do not get caught in 'It wasn't my fault' or 'Poor me'.

### **The Road to Freedom Paradigm**

This is a component of the personal development programs created by George Addair.

The philosophy: everything you want is on the other side of fear.

In order to break through this obstacle, clearly identify your fears. The best way to understand how and why you sabotage yourself is to know yourself better. Take the time to really concentrate on this step. You are then in a powerful position to design strategies to counteract your fears.

### **Six Confidence Building Strategies**

1. Every day remind yourself that you did some things well. Don't beat yourself up over what didn't work or get done. Focus on what you accomplished.
2. Read inspiring biographies and autobiographies. Sound familiar? Find out about people who found a way to win despite overwhelming odds. Remember, your capacity far exceeds your current performance. Challenges are a reality. You will have difficulties. As you face them, your confidence will grow and you will have plenty of wins.
3. Be thankful  
No matter how bad you have it, someone else has it worse. Put things in perspective. Focus on the benefits, things and people that you often take for granted.
4. Build excellent support around you  
Surround yourself with people who will encourage, support and uplift you. People who believe in you and the principles you wish to follow.
5. Push yourself to accomplish short-term goals  
Getting things done boosts your confidence like nothing else. Create an environment of accomplishment. Each week, focus on your three most important targets. Do something to further your goals every day. Take one small step at a time.
6. Do something for yourself every week  
Find a way to celebrate your weekly achievements.

### **What To Do If You Hit a Slump**

1. Recognise you are in one.  
Take time to rethink and refocus. Talk to your support team.

2. Remind yourself of a major accomplishment.  
Concentrate on something you are really proud of.  
You've done it before – you can do it again.

3. Get back to basics  
Have you lost track of the fundamentals? Are you doing the easy things rather than the rewarding things? Take a break if you need it. Life is full of cycles. Take it one step at a time. You will get back on top.

### **7. ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT**

Ask and you shall receive. Are you asking enough? Success is difficult if you don't ask. Here's seven ways you can improve your business by asking.

1. Ask for information

Ask potential customers what their needs are before you try to tell them why your product is for them. Ask questions that begin with who, why, what, where, when and how. Be genuinely interested, you can't fake it. Here are two good opening questions:

- a) What's your single biggest challenge at this time?
- b) What are some of your most important goals?

Follow up with more questions that will get to the heart of what your client is feeling. Don't interrogate – comment occasionally, pause and show that you are listening. Finally, when you have developed a rapport, hopefully even trust, you can talk about your product or service.

2. Ask for business

Many don't. Once you've given a presentation, ask for business. Be confident. The closing question should always be one that requires a 'Yes' or 'No' response. A good 'no pressure' question is: 'Would you like to give it a try?' And really, who wouldn't? There's no obligation, what do they have to lose? If you're struggling, a humorous question is simply 'Do you wanna buy one?'

3. Ask for written endorsements

Testimonials are powerful and will generate more business. They should be well written and focused on results. Ask for testimonials directly after you've provided excellent service. Ask the client what benefits they've received from your product or service.

Take down their comments and write up a brief, powerful testimonial. Hire a professional if you're not a good writer. Send it back to the client for their approval and signature. Collect as many as you can and display them in your office and promotional material.

4. Ask for top quality referrals

This is one of the easiest and cheapest ways to expand your customer base. Only one in ten businesses actually have a referral system! Always ask, and remember your core

## SELECTED AS ESSENTIAL READING FOR BUSINESS PEOPLE

clients, they are usually more than happy to offer a couple of names.

If someone says no to your business, ask them too. However, you also need to define what a good prospect is before you ask, otherwise it wastes everybody's time.

### 5. Ask for more business

Offer more than your basic product. Find out what your clients want and when they want it. Always up sell. It's generally easier to sell more to existing customers than constantly trying to drum up new business.

### 6. Ask to renegotiate

When your mortgage is up and it's time to renew ask for a lower interest rate. Competition is tough, so there's a good chance your lender will agree. Most agreements have more flexibility than you think. If you need to, ask for a change in the terms.

### 7. Ask for feedback

Form monthly focus groups where all your clients can meet; offer feedback; talk to each other about common challenges they're facing and give you input on future directions. If you own a business or lead a group of people, ask them what you can do to be a better boss – if you dare.

## 8. CONSISTENT PERSISTENCE

You will never achieve big results in your life without consistent and persistent action.

This section contains two of the most important principles in the book.

### Embrace your Greatest Power

Realise that in life you don't have to do anything. Everything in life is a choice. Everything.

Don't get caught in the 'have to' trap. Have-to's put you in a position of pressure, whereas choose-to's put you in a position of power.

Make a conscious effort to consistently think about every decision (from doing the dishes to getting angry) as a choice. Taking personal responsibility unleashes great power, freedom and energy.

This power will enable you to consistently make better choices, which in turn create better habits, better character, better opportunities and better results.

### The Double-A Formula

This formula stands for Agreements and Accountability. Adopting this formula 100 percent will make immeasurable differences in your personal and professional lives.

All broken relationships can be traced back to broken agreements. As a society, we seem to be having more

difficulty in keeping agreements. Just look at all the lawyers we need as a result!

Stand out by maintaining your integrity. How? Keep your agreements. Every day you make agreements, and every day others judge you by your actions afterwards. And remember, there are no small agreements.

Repeatedly breaking agreements diminishes your reputation and eventually loses you business or relationships. When you develop the habit of consistently keeping little agreements, the big ones follow naturally. As do the rewards. Perhaps the biggest reward comes from knowing that you are a person of high integrity.

It is usually possible to renegotiate when you are having difficulty keeping an agreement. Taking the time to do so maintains your integrity.

### The Integrity Factor

1. When you always tell the truth, people trust you.
2. When you do what you say, as promised, people respect you.
3. When you make others feel special, people like you.

The words 'as promised' in point two are important. Used in your correspondence they subtly reinforce that you do follow through.

Applying the Integrity factor will put you in the top 3 percent of performers. Your clients will be more than happy to refer you. And that can only be good news!

## 9. TAKING DECISIVE ACTION

Are you a procrastinator? Do you constantly put things off before a last minute scramble? Procrastination will cripple your future if you don't do something about it, and fast.

Six good reasons you may be procrastinating:

1. You're bored
2. You are overwhelmed with work
3. Your confidence has slipped
4. You have low self-esteem
5. You are doing work you don't really enjoy
6. You are easily distracted, or just downright lazy!

### Active Decision-making

Remember the Double Spiral, be aware if you begin to start to slip into a downward spiral. Visualise two pictures. One is an image of what will happen if you keep putting off this task. Make it as vivid an image as you can, after all this is what will really happen.

The other image is your future if you take action now; imagine all the good that will come if you do it now. If the temptation to put something off enters your mind, visualise those two pictures immediately to help you make the right decision.

### The TA-DA formula

Do the following when you need to make a decision:

1. Think. We've talked about this a lot. The more you think and consider all the implications of a decision, the better the decision will be.
2. Ask as many questions as you can. Find out everything you need to know from a variety of sources. Don't over analyse, but make a well informed decision
3. Decide. Half the battle. Many just can't make a decision. If you sit on the fence for too long, you'll get stuck.
4. Act. The critical step. Everything depends on taking action. Nothing will change until you do.

## 10. LIVING ON PURPOSE

There are people between thirty-five and fifty-five who come to a point in their lives and ask 'Is this all there is?' Something is missing. Eventually they realise that there is more to life than paying off the house and accumulating material things.

This principle encompasses everything in this book. It is the master of all the other strategies. Even if you have many success habits, great goals, take action and achieve them all, you may still not be satisfied. We crave a purpose, to make a difference.

Three key points that will help you find your purpose:

1. Align your purpose with your natural ability. You're given talents for a reason. If your purpose is conflicting with your talents then uncertainty can result. That's not the way it should be.
2. Be determined. Never give up. Your purpose should consume you; let nothing stand in its way. Your life will be fulfilled each day as you do what you were born to do.
3. Maintain a humble attitude. The people who have done the most good in our world were not concerned about getting the limelight. Is your purpose really just about ego? No. When you find your purpose, it will most likely involve helping or lifting others.

### A LIFE BASED ON PURPOSE

At thirteen years old, Craig Kielburger is different from your average Canadian teen. He leads an international organisation, travels around the world on speaking assignments, has been interviewed on 60 Minutes as a champion for his cause, met with the Canadian President, the Vice President of the United States and inspired hundreds of thousands of people.

What does he do? He exposes and fights child labour wherever he can find it. It's this passion and purpose that has caused leaders of nations to stand up and take notice, and brought many to an awareness of the plight of children used for labour throughout the world. And he's done it all at age thirteen.

There are no shortcuts to building a life of substance and purpose, a life that brings you what you truly want. It takes time and effort to be more than you are already. But the challenge is worthwhile. Following the fundamentals shared here will improve your personal and business life immeasurably.

Make the choice today, and every day, to become the best you can be, one day at a time. Focus on one point that has struck you. Make that a priority. Then take the next. Gradually, your new habits will become a part of you. Soon you will be amazed at how your life has changed. Go on – make a difference!