Mastering Your Inner Game

We’re going to talk about the inner game of building your business. I believe that the inner game is simply all-important. “The inner game” is a new term for a classic idea explained many different times, many different ways by virtually every success educator, and even philosophers.

In the book *Think and Grow Rich*, Napoleon Hill reveals the secret using the words, “thoughts are things.” Dennis Waitley has worked with U.S. astronauts and Olympic athletes on their inner games. Author Tim Galloway explores the ideas of his books, *The Inner Game of Golf, The Inner Game of Tennis and The Inner Game of Selling*.

Interestingly, there is a never-ending connection between the inner game in sport and the inner game in business, allowing experts like Waitley, Galloway, ex-quarterback Fran Tarkenton and golfer Arnold Palmer, among others, to step back and forth between expounding on success techniques in the athletic and business worlds.

In all cases, these people speak much more about attitudes than aptitudes for a good reason. Surveys, studies and research consistently reaffirm that 85% of your success will depend on attitudinal factors, 15% on aptitude.

Yet in your formal education and in most continuing education, the emphasis is on the opposite - 15% on attitude, 85% on aptitude.

Certainly technical knowledge and skills are important. In your profession, you must deliver excellence based on your staying up to date in techniques, products, materials and ideas.

However, such excellence alone will never build a successful, growing, profitable business. The excellence that will is an excellence created and sustained in your own mind. This is the most difficult, least tangible aspect of building your business that we’ll ever talk about, but it is also probably the
most important.

Yeah, but what is it?

So what is the inner game? The way I see it, the inner game can be broken down into four major components:

- Self esteem
- Self image
- Self confidence
- Self discipline

Quality in these four areas is a necessary foundation to personal and professional success.

Self Esteem

Self Esteem is essentially your feelings of worth. How much success do you deserve? How much money should you make? How much is your time worth?

Here, briefly, are seven ideas for strengthening self-esteem:

1. Establish worthwhile, meaningful goals and values.
2. Take massive action to get your own financial house in order if it isn’t now. Reduce debt, bring expenses under income, and invest every single month.
3. Give yourself recognition for each and every accomplishment.
5. Associate with positive-minded, happy people who encourage and motivate you. Don’t hang out with folks who are negative, unhappy, critical or jealous.
6. Continually acquire new know-how in you profession and in the areas of business, sales and communication.
7. Regularly invest in improving your office and home environments, tools and equipment, wardrobe and other external things that impact on your attitudes.

Self Image

Self-image is how you see yourself; it’s who you think you are. Your self-image is controlled mostly by self-imposed limits. Very few people ever perform beyond those self-imposed limits.

A salesman whose father never earned more than $25,000 a year in his life may well see himself as a $25,000 a year guy. And he will subconsciously screw
up the opportunities to earn more that come his way.

In the financial area, the controversial Reverend Ike calls this a money rejection syndrome, and I am convinced that such a thing definitely exists. One man I know, who made over $100 million in his business in its first three years from scratch, had gone broke in business several times before. After the three years of remarkable success, he said, “Making $100 million is about the easiest thing I’ve ever done. Believing it could happen to me was the hard part that took 20 years.”

Your self-image was created and is sustained through self talk, the use of affirmations - and that is also the method you can use to alter and modify your self image, literally as you wish.

I call the process self image goal setting, because most people who set goals set only “to get” and “to have” goals; they fail to set “to be” goals. I encourage you to balance your approach to goal setting by including some self-image modification.

**Self Discipline**

Self-Disciple, the fourth component of the inner game, is quite possibly the most important.

Success lecturer Jim Rohn says that most people do not associate lack of discipline with lack of success.

Most people think of failure as one earth-shattering event, such as a company going out of business or a home being foreclosed on. This, however, Jim Rohn says, is how failure happens.

Failure is rarely the result of some isolated event; rather, it is a consequence of a long list of accumulated little failures, which happen as a result of too little discipline. I agree. I find that most people understandably tend to look everywhere but in the mirror for the sources of their failures as well as the victories.

I’m here to tell you it’s not the town you’re in, not your location, not the economy, not the weather, not your competitors - it’s your own discipline that makes the difference between excellence or mediocrity, between getting by or getting rich.

It’s interesting to observe professionals. I often say to my associates, “Let me watch the professional’s behavior before, during and after the seminar, and I’ll guess his annual income within a few thousand dollars.” It’s actually pretty easy to do.
Jim Rohn says that discipline is the bridge between thought and accomplishment.

I’d encourage you to take the self-discipline challenge very seriously.

Select those areas that you know are your weakest links - timely paperwork, punctuality, daily self-improvement study, being happy and enthusiastic first thing in the morning, whatever your personal stumbling blocks are - and apply new, tough, demanding disciplines to yourself in those areas.

You’ll find that success in these particular areas of your day-to-day life will roll over into greater success in all parts of you life.

For example, let’s look at the ultimate game players - professional football players. A pro ball player knows that every single moment of his on-the-job performance is recorded on film, to be replayed and reviewed later in stop-action slow motion, for critique by his superiors and co-workers.

If your day was filmed and reviewed, how would you feel during the replay?

Of course, the professional football players who have to put up with this sort of thing are highly paid.

Yes, the inner game stuff is tough. If being a big success were easy, everybody would be one. You’ve got to decide what you really want to be, do, have, accomplish - and decide whether or not you’re willing to adhere to the disciplines necessary to get it.

In order to have the opportunity to accomplish virtually any goals you honestly desire, you must accept the related responsibility for everything you get.