



# Performance Matters

Vol. II No. III

Newsletter

## Top Ten Ingredients for Individual Effectiveness

We are all busy with lots of demands placed on our time. We are scrambling to keep up with the endless information that keeps coming our way. Individual effectiveness is more important now than ever before. Yet, for most people this seems to be an endless battle with no clear markers to guide the way. Increasing our effectiveness is not an event but a process that takes into account managing the outer demands as well as staying grounded on the inner.

Here is what I consider to be the Top 10 Ingredients for Increasing Individual Effectiveness.

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Top 10 Ways to Increase Your Effectiveness  
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CREATE Model

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Robin Wilson is the founder of Reach and Achieve Associates, a performance and development coaching, training and mentoring firm that specializes in helping companies access, coach and retain key talent. The programs are designed to develop, support and maximize the people resource of an organization.



Robin has facilitated presentations with groups of 150 or more, and has been a guest speaker for several well-known organizations, including the New York State Conference of Mayors, The Governor's Office of Employee Relations, and the New York State Society of Medical Assistants Annual Convention.

She co-authored the book *Maximize Your Mind; Peak Your Potential* available on her web site.

Her article "Ethics in Sales" was published in the HRDQ Press.

For a complete listing of products and services visit our web sites at: [www.ReachandAchieve.com](http://www.ReachandAchieve.com) and [www.PerformanceLeadershipTools.com](http://www.PerformanceLeadershipTools.com)

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## Understand and Accept Yourself

### 1. Self Knowledge:

There is no substitute for understanding ourselves. The key ingredient for effectiveness of any kind is accepting what our core strengths and weaknesses are and recognizing what gets in the way of expressing our talents. When we have a degree of self-knowledge we are able to navigate our present and future instead of being thrown around by the winds of time. Self-knowledge gives us the ability to build a sustainable plan for the future rather than a wish list based on shallow wishes and goals with no foundation.

Awareness is a process that can be begun through various assessments, observation of self and feedback from others. The important thing is to start the journey and experience the freedom that comes with understanding ourselves.

### 2. Acceptance of who and what we are – not what we think we should be:

It's human nature to want to conform to the hidden rules of society or the high expectations we place on ourselves; yet every time we do we give up a part of us. As we begin the journey of understanding ourselves – we must accept the strengths as well as the weaknesses and understand that it's not just our strong points that make us who we are but our limitations as well. Let us try not to become this figure head that takes away our humanness.

*“Let us not look back in anger or forward in fear, but around us in awareness.”*

■ James Thurber

## Leverage Strengths and Manage Weaknesses

### 3. Leverage Strengths:

As we learn to embrace our strengths we begin to understand what gives us power. Webster's Dictionary shows the definition of leverage as the ability to act or to influence people, events, decisions, etc. All too often, people are aware of their strengths but not sure how to use them or are uncomfortable showcasing their strong points. The first key to leveraging strengths is finding ways to express the parts of ourselves that make us unique. The second point is to find the areas where are strengths could have the greatest impact. Which areas if expressed would have the widest influence? This involves silencing the voice of judgment and moving through the fear. Unexpressed strengths results in unused energy that if properly channeled could move mountains.

### 4. Manage Weaknesses:

Weaknesses can overshadow strengths if they are not properly managed. It is important to note that we are not talking about changing those parts of ourselves that we don't like. It is about keeping weaknesses in check so they don't undermine our effectiveness. This can involve finding other people that complement our unique styles with their differences. It could involve changing around task to target our strengths rather than weaknesses. Sometimes though, it is impossible to work around our limitations so we must be aware of what they are and do our best to channel and contain them. Just as not expressing our strengths results in unused energy, not managing our limitations results in wasted energy and ineffectiveness.

## Reaching Out

### 5. Reaching out to others:

No man is an island; we all need other people to survive and to flourish. Sometimes in our quest for independence and success we unconsciously alienate other people, thinking we have to be self-sufficient and not rely on anyone else. We all need people to accomplish our goals and we all need people when times are down. Every individual eventually feels the ebb of life where we hit that wall and like nature things seem dormant and we feel unable to make an impact on a situation. The ability to reach out to other people at our down times is what creates energy and pulls us out of our slump. Sometimes we keep ourselves stuck and ineffective much longer than we need to because of our inability to ask for help.

### Questions to Consider

1. What's strengths do you need to leverage?
2. What weaknesses impact your effectiveness the most?
3. Who can you reach out to?
4. What relationships need nurturing?
5. What drains your energy the most?

## 6. Self-Knowledge

### 6. Giving:

Giving and receiving is part of the natural flow of life. Yet, sometimes as much as we want to give to others we don't know how or we think we have nothing to offer. Often, the problem is not desire but simply blinders. People are busy – their minds are on everything around themselves, what they have to do and what problems need to be solved. According to Zig Zigler, you can get everything in life you want if you will just help enough other people get what they want. This requires taking off the blinders and focusing on what is happening to others around us. When we open our minds and our hearts and look for opportunities to contribute- possibilities open up. It's when our minds are closed and we put all our attention inward that we see no openings. The next time you feel stuck or unsure what direction to move in – find a way to give to another person no matter how small and you will find the answer you were looking for.

*“Courage means to keep working a relationship, to continue seeking solutions to difficult problems and to stay focused during stressful periods.”*

■ Denis Waitley

*“Conversation enriches the understanding, but solitude is the school of genius.”*

■ Ralph Waldo Emerson

## **Sense of Purpose and Communication**

### **7. Sense of Purpose:**

Purpose gives us direction and the resolve to make things happen. Without this internal guide we find ourselves lacking critical focus and easily distracted.

What is most important gets put aside for the urgent pressing matters and at the end of a week/month/year we suddenly find ourselves no further ahead. Acting with intention fuels our actions with clarity and direction as we move towards the end result while keeping focused on our overall vision.

### **8. Communication:**

Communication is the art of building or destroying bridges. As humans we are more powerful than we realize and with each exchange we have the potential to change another person. How we choose to use that power though is the question that must be answered. If we continually react to situations and people without much thought we hinder our effectiveness and over time tear down the relationships that can make us great. However, when we enter each exchange with clarity, compassion and understanding we can change the world one conversation at a time.

## **Self Management and Reflection**

### **9. Self Management:**

Self-management can be defined as the methods, skills, and strategies by which we effectively direct are activities to achieve desired outcomes. Managing ourselves can include anything from managing our emotions to managing our time. According to the October 2007 *Harvard Business Review* - time is a finite resource. Energy is different. Defined in physics as the capacity to work, energy comes from the body, emotions, mind, and spirit in human beings. In each area we can systematically expand or renew our energy by gaining insight into the behaviors that give us power. Understanding this energy is the key to managing emotions, time and resources.

### **10. Reflection**

We live in a fast paced society; everyone is scrambling to get everything done and still have time left to do what they enjoy. Taking time to reflect is a luxury few can afford. Yet without it we lose perspective on what is most important and fall victim to the urgent but not important matters of the day. Reflection anchors us in what really matters and allows us to respond rather than react to the pressures of the day. Through contemplation we can look at past events and situations from an objective point of view, helping us increase our learning and understanding as well as our awareness.

Remember, life is a journey and taking the time to practice and be aware each of these 10 items will increase your success – guaranteed. Have fun, enjoy the journey and help others along the way!

## **Decision Making:**

**When making a decision try using the CREATE model.**

### **CREATE**

**C** – Creating the vision of what you want the outcome of the decision to be.

**R** – Reflecting back on earlier decisions that you have made. What did you learn that could help you make this decision?

**E** – Empathizing with other people who are affected by this decision. Try putting yourself in their shoes.

**A** – Acting. Any decision without a plan of action and follow-through is doomed from the outset.

**T** – Thinking about the best course of action. What are some potential barriers?

**E** – Emoting. What are your feelings regarding this decision? Get the facts and balance them with your intuition.

Excerpted from *Maximize Your Mind; Peak Your Potential*

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