

7 Steps to Personal Growth

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Personal growth can help you make your life more enjoyable and fulfilling. However, if you're broke, overweight, don't have any friends, and lack goals, where do you begin? ***The key to beginning a personal growth journey is setting your priorities.*** There's a lot you can do in five years, but you can't do a whole lot in five months.

Spend your early efforts as effectively as possible:

1. Measure your current situation. Think about a typical day in your life. Then think about a typical weekend. Write down whatever comes to mind. A partial list might look like this:

- Get up for work. I hate getting up this early and I hate my job.
- In the shower – thinking about how I can't pay my electric bill and still go out with my friends this weekend. I don't like my body.
- Driving to work- I love my car
- Get home. The dog peed on the carpet.
- Watch TV. I don't really like it, but I don't have anything else to do.
- And so on.

2. Rate each of these experiences. On a scale of 1-10, 10 being perfect, rate each thought. It's the low-rated parts of your life that are dragging you down. Avoid spending your time on raising a 7 to a 10. ***It's the 1s, 2s, and 3s that are wreaking havoc.*** Until you've raised everything up to at least a 5, stick with the lower-rated items on your list.

3. **Create a 10.** Let's suppose your weight is a big issue. You rate it a "2", because it negatively impacts your confidence and self-esteem. It's also becoming a health issue. You also believe that it hurts your social life. What is the perfect alternative? Write a little story.

- I'm on the bathroom scale, and my weight is 170 pounds. This is the perfect weight for me. I look and feel good in my clothes. My doctor is pleased with my cholesterol and blood pressure numbers. Women are starting to notice me again. I have the confidence to ask out Mary for this weekend.
- Now you have an objective that clearly addresses a challenging part of your life.

4. **Consider the people in your life.** If you want to enhance any part of your life, there will be people that attempt to hold you back. They might not do it intentionally, but it will happen. It's hard to kick your mom out of your life, but many other people are optional.

- You may need to add people to your life. Perhaps you need a personal trainer or a few friends that have successfully lost weight. A few friends at the gym would be helpful, too.

5. **What do you need?** A cookbook with healthy recipes? A gym membership? A jump rope? Compare your needs with your current resources. Can you bridge the gap?

6. **Focus on your habits.** Your current situation is result of years of less-than-great habits. Better habits provide better outcomes. ***Make small changes to your daily habits.*** Then it's just a matter of being compliant and patient.

7. **Learn how to be uncomfortable.** The faster you wish to change, the more

discomfort you'll face. You'll have to slow down or accept that discomfort is part of the deal. The ability to deal with uncomfortable feelings grows with practice.

It's daunting to change every aspect of your life, so don't even try! ***Focus on the most negative parts of your life first.*** You can then turn your attention to the less-critical items. Beginning a personal growth journey is an exciting time. Good luck!