

## Personal Mastery

*You can only lead others where you yourself are willing to go.* Lachlan McLean

### Personal Mastery Is:

A journey of individual, personal, continuous improvement; 'Journey' and 'continuous' emphasize the ongoing nature of our pursuit of Personal Mastery.

**“No man is free who is not a master of himself.”  
(Epictetus)**

Personal mastery is about creating what one wants in life and in work. Continually expanding personal mastery is a discipline based on a number of key principles and practices: personal vision, personal purpose, holding creative tension between vision and current reality, mitigating the impact of deeply rooted beliefs that are contrary to personal mastery, commitment to truth, and understanding the subconscious.

“The foundation for personal mastery your personal power lies in your ‘thoughts.’ What you think determines what you feel, how you perceive, your internal reality and initial road maps for navigating your life.”

Michael Hall

Peter Senge says, “Personal mastery goes beyond competence and skills...it means approaching one’s life as a creative work, living life from a creative as opposed to a reactive viewpoint.”

Eric Chen says:

Personal Mastery is our experience of ourselves - actively living our lives. We find it in the spiritual journey we take in our lives the scared journey of defining ourselves. It lies with our expression of Who We Are - our choices. We decide what our lives mean, and live it.

Personal Mastery affects all of us and all of ourselves - our choices create our internal environment (e.g. actions, beliefs, emotions, and motives) and external environment (e.g. friends, job, and social status). Personal Mastery cannot promise us perfection or stunning success, but it makes our lives meaningful, and ourselves more human. We do not find mastery in the faraway tomorrow or in a coach, it exists right here and now within us.

***No one else can live your life for you.***

Beacon Organisational Development purports that Personal Mastery Is active empowerment in which we remain strong and centred. It is a state from which we manifest the fullness of our spirit as we journey in the present, empowering the gifts of our soul purpose with every action that we take. Personal mastery is acting without hesitation to break new ground, trusting the strength of our inner communication to support us to live as a pioneer. There are no rules to limit us – we are creating our own unique path, awakening to the creative power of consciousness.

A Practitioner of Personal Mastery is:

- ? Always looking for ways to grow, new things to learn, interesting people to meet. The devotee of Personal Mastery selects from the abundance of obvious opportunities for growth: books, tapes, lectures, courses, etc. The less obvious opportunities require assiduous attention to the learning potential in the people we involve ourselves with and the events of everyday. We speak of learning to learn. Most professionals acquire skills rapidly when needed. We also learn to expand our world and our self knowledge.
- ? Committed to life which stresses growth and satisfaction in personal and professional life.

Practitioners of Personal Mastery exhibit the following characteristics:

- ? They have a sense of purpose that lies behind their goals
- ? Their vision is more like a calling than a good idea
- ? They see current reality as an ally, not an enemy
- ? They are committed to seeing reality increasingly accurately
- ? They are extremely inquisitive
- ? They do not resist, but work with, the forces of change
- ? They feel connected to others and to life itself
- ? They feel that they are part of a larger creative process that they can influence but cannot unilaterally control

*A personal illumination of Personal Mastery:*

*I am aligned with the truth of my essence. I acknowledge my soul purpose with the Power of Vision*

Neslyn Watson-Druée

### **Why Personal Mastery?**

**“Personal Mastery set directions for our mind and emotions to go, direction that will go in a generative way to bring out the best in us.”**

*“Beliefs that govern our perceptions states, health, skills etc. are thoughts embedded in a frame of confirmation.”*

“Mastery comes from discovering our thinking as ‘executive operations.’ We humans never just think we think about our thinking, and then we think about that thinking. Our thoughts-and- feelings reflect onto themselves to become more and more layered. Thus the secret of Personal Mastery lies in discovering our higher thoughts-and-feelings and choosing those that serve us well.”

Michael Hall

**“You will see it when you believe it” - Wayne Dyer**

**Unlike our Stomach our Brain will process whatever it is fed.**

Personal Mastery enables us to look after ourselves economically. The day of the parental company offering lifetime employment is gone. We carry our portfolios of qualities and skills with us. An ongoing effort to be better people and better at what we do is connected

with prosperity. We who are in business for ourselves "eat what we grow." Our lives are like a self-sustaining farm; we live by what we create. Employees of large and small Organisations are wise to take a similar view. Dedication to Personal Mastery equips us to forge a collaborative relationship with Organisations that both need our skills and provide us with growth opportunities.

Senge links personal mastery to effective leadership stating, "The core leadership strategy is simple: be a model. Commit yourself to your own personal mastery."

Individuals benefit in rich, rewarding lives. When we pursue Personal Mastery we become more comfortable with ourselves, more able to appreciate and enjoy pleasures both large and small. Deepak Chopra connects purpose in life with health and longevity. We in Beacon Organisational Development believe that Personal Mastery followers enjoy better health than they would otherwise.

Living in a Personal Mastery frame of mind makes life more fun, more exciting than just rocking along. The adrenaline rush of discovery, the quiet satisfaction of completing a task well or coaching a friend in a growth pattern disallows boredom and negative thinking.

***Luck comes to those who create it for themselves by being alert to ideas and knowledge which others may overlook.***

A central piece of endeavour in Personal Mastery is self understanding. Just living may advance our understanding of self some; pursuing the knowledge and understanding of self rewards us with fuller comprehension of who we are.

We must recognise our world view, our mental models, in order to understand our needs, wants and reactions. Once we bring mental models into awareness, we can make changes if we choose. With awareness and dedication to our own growth, we truly can recreate ourselves.

To take charge of ourselves, we have to build up a strong sense of ourselves, develop a strong ego-strength, access and build empowering resource states such as confidence, self-esteem, resilience, assertiveness, sensory awareness, etc.

By taking charge of our higher states we can get ourselves to do things that we want to do and cut out the frames that sabotage our success, happiness and productivity.

One hallmark of the growing person is the management of the present reality and the vision of the future. We can bring present thinking and vision together by: accepting the tension between what is now and what will be; believing that we can make the journey from now into our future; seeing our vision as including the present, that is, living the vision now.

Discipline stands alone as an absolute necessity for Personal Mastery. Without it, personal habits and outside influences control our daily lives. Disciplining ourselves to do the work of Personal Mastery is not the easiest thing to do and sometimes unpleasant. We choose to suffer the pain of discipline rather than the pain of regret. The pain of regret is nagging and ongoing. The pain of discipline subsides with persistence.

The first discipline is to recognise that we must change and that change consumes time and energy and often brings discomfort.

'Self' and 'system' make up an environment. All aspects of our environment, especially the people in it can teach us something useful. Take advantage of others' insight. Listen! Everyone has something to tell us about people. We choose the people we mix with on an ongoing basis. We intentionally surround ourselves with positive, caring, growing, realistic, fun people and mix with others sparingly. If we can help negative, struggling people, we do gladly. If not, we put some space between us and them.

**We discipline ourselves to keep failure in perspective as a learning experience. No experience is final unless we see it as so.**

Personal Mastery requires disciplining ourselves to give up time-wasters and put our time on achieving our goals. This is not to say that we are always dead serious and working at something that looks like work; we have fun, too!

We set our own agenda by making our own plans. We have our own vision, mission and goals and as well as those we share with others.

### **The 7 Steps to Personal Mastery are:**

#### **1. Core Values**

Core Values are the spark of aliveness and passion in each of us. They are inherent to who we are. Values have no judgment, they are not right or wrong, good or bad, they just are. Distinguishing our core values is a key first step on the path.

#### **2. Self-First**

Self-First is the paradigm shift where we change our first priority from taking care of others needs first to placing ourselves first in all areas. This shift requires practice and patience with ourselves and creates a clear path for our walk on the journey to Personal Mastery.

#### **3. Spiritual Knowledge**

Spiritual Knowledge is the step when we develop a healthy nutritious diet of spiritual understanding and clarity about who we are. This includes connecting with our spiritual essence, practicing stillness, meditation and learning key spiritual principles. In this step we develop the essential muscle of hearing and listening to the wisdom from within.

#### **4. 7 Abilities**

These are the natural and fundamental abilities that each of us has within us. The development and practice of The 7 Abilities open us to a new level of personal and professional power, awareness, mindfulness and action.

#### **5. Physical Body**

The focus in this step is on physical wellness, which includes health, nutrition, exercise, breath work, drinking water and our learning to pay attention to the key energy centres in our body.

Listen carefully to the messages of your body; be aware of its responses to the situations you encounter. Pay attention to how your body responds to the food that you eat, to the activities you participate in, to the locations that you visit and to the people that you meet. These physical vibrations are the silent language that unlocks the door to future material abundance and health. Be aware and act accordingly.

#### **6. Material World**

As we walk the path of Personal Mastery we discover that the physical space that we inhabit becomes a key to our walk. Here we look at our home, office, car and any other physical

space that we may want to consider. This is about clearing, ordering and bringing intention and focus to our physical material world.

## **7. The New Intellect**

Through this journey, our intellectual perspectives shift. This step brings clarity around the changing role and purpose of our intellectual dimension.

Practicing the “Kaizen” of Personal Mastery means that we are committed to the continuous improvement of *everything* we do, in *all* areas of our life. This is an ongoing journey of learning, where our results reflect feedback for the future, not failure. Moreover, mastery implies that *because* we value our innate gifts, we set up structures and support in our lives, in order to fully and reliably express them. So-called self-discipline, then, is *not* an act of controlling and punishing ourselves, but is motivated by self-love.

Mastery doesn't *block* unfolding from within, but catalyzes and sustains it. For some exceptional folks it may be fine to just flow with the spontaneous expression of the self, yet for the rest of us, both inspiration *and* structure are required. Inspiration alone risks losing momentum, and structure without spirit crumbles in the dust.

### **Internal Synergy**

“Mastery” does not necessarily imply “controlling” anyone, including oneself. What works over time is to integrate the various and often conflicting aspects of personality. The goal is to get all of us on the same team, working together, instead of internal struggle, sometimes bordering on warfare.

***Mastery emerges when we align our attentions with our higher level intentions.***

### **Personal Power**

As we create internal synergy, our personal power grows, and we then naturally take the driver's seat to our destiny. This includes assuming complete responsibility for the direction your life is headed. We realize that we can create anything we want, within our circle of influence, and according to our skills, talents and competence. Some say this takes self-discipline. We prefer to use the term *personal power*, and with that the willingness to be at choice. Real power comes from listening to the stirrings of our soul. Becoming who we are meant to be, means living in harmony with the mysterious heartbeat of life itself. Unfolding our potential can not be *made* to happen from the level of ego, it can only be supported by creating the right conditions.

***“In the end, Personal Mastery is the journey of tapping your full potential as a human being – through being the leader of your life, and by co-creating with the spirit that runs through you.”***

Neslyn Watson-Druée

***Energy flows where attention goes as determined and governed by intention***

### **Personal Mastery In learning Organisations**

Organisations benefit from encouraging their people in the direction of Personal Mastery. Peter Senge observed, “Organisations learn only through individuals who learn. Individual learning does not guarantee organisational learning. But without it no organisational learning occurs.” The reservoirs of ideas and energy stay full and available where Personal Mastery is nourished.

Evers, Rush, and Berdrow, in their book “*The Bases of Competence*”, articulate the skills and competencies for the individual. We believe that if those skills and competencies are achieved, would qualify an individual as having attained personal mastery. These skills and competencies are learning, personal organisation and time management, personal strengths, and problem-solving and analytic abilities.

The first skill of managing self is **learning**. Learning takes place when we gain and accumulate knowledge from our everyday experiences. To do so requires the individual to compare and integrate their experiences and evaluate their usefulness in such ways that they become better at achieving the outcomes of their position. Learning also requires an individual to keep up-to-date on developments in their respective field. Managers have the responsibility of providing opportunities for staff development. Individuals have the responsibility to ensure that they continuously take full advantage of such opportunities.

**Personal organisation and time management** first involve setting priorities. Unless one understands the relative importance of the objectives that are to be accomplished they cannot complete them in the most effective manner. Secondly, managing several tasks at once is needed to address the complexity of work today and thus is a requirement of every knowledge worker. Finally, it is essential to be able to allocate time efficiently to meet deadlines. Priorities imply that deadlines must be met; simultaneously managing several tasks suggest the same.

**Personal strengths** come from developing traits for dealing with day-to-day work situations. Maintaining a high energy level, motivating oneself to function at an optimal level of performance, working well in stressful situations, keeping a positive attitude, being able to work independently, and responding appropriately to constructive criticism are examples of such traits. Attitude obviously plays an important role in achieving personal strengths. Managers have a role and responsibility in creating an environment where positive attitudes flourish. But ultimately, it is the individual who in the end is most important in demonstrating positive attitude.

**Problem-solving and analytical abilities** consist of identifying, prioritizing, and solving problems, individually and in groups. Individuals need the ability to ask the right questions, sort out many facets of a problem, and contribute ideas as well as answers regarding problems. More and more, it takes teams of people to solve complex problems; thus, people need to work effectively as a team member or individually. Both hard skills (technical) and soft skills (human relations) are required to be a good team member or to be effective individually. Finally, individuals need to use both well-established methods and creative and innovative approaches to be good problem-solvers and to analyze situations appropriately.

More today than ever before, Organisations face the inevitable tension between flexibility and control-flexibility to deal with the increasingly complex work world and control to ensure that competitive resources are used efficiently and effectively. The only real solution to this tension is for individuals to increasingly manage self. Therefore, Personal Mastery is a critical competence for the 21st century knowledge worker.

### ***Mastery emerges through application***

We will never experience personal mastery if we do not implement and apply what we know. Even the greatest and grandest and most compelling ideas achieve nothing if we fail to act upon them.

If we had realised this, we would not have to search for something that we already have, already know, and already do it. Books, articles, and speeches can only give us a version of Personal Mastery, for the true Personal Mastery has no words it just happens.

When we truly achieve Personal Mastery we do not mention it for it so obvious that it does not merit a mention. We live Personal Mastery, and thus becomes one with it, making all our Personal Mastery. Become the master, and we would have mastered Personal Mastery.

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**Senge, Peter. *The Fifth Discipline and The Fifth Discipline Field Book*. Nicholas Brealey Publishing Ltd. 1995**

**Evers, Frederick T., James C. Rush, and Iris Berdrow. *The Bases of Competence*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1998.**