

How to THRIVE and Not Just SURVIVE

BY DESI WILLIAMSON

I'd like to ask you a question: Master of change or victim of circumstance? The question is, which of these are you?

Having crossed into the new millenium, you probably find yourself, once again, making New Year's resolutions to do certain things by predetermined dates. How committed will you be to seeing the proposed changes through? I've found that it's easy to get excited about something initially, but how do you maintain the burning desire to change beyond the initial enthusiasm?

I believe there are five actionable steps that we can take to ensure lasting change in our lives. This involves your decision to sit down with a pen and paper and make a firm commitment to document your life from this point forward. I believe that the answers to five powerful questions can alter the course of our lives forever. I'd like you to find a nice quiet place where you won't be disturbed for a few hours, and let's go to work.

The first step involves your personal identity, and the operative question is who are you? Now, there's a rule in applying this exercise and it's this . . . you can't use labels to describe who you are. Here's a little more help. If I

were attending your funeral, what would you want said about you? What kind of person are you? What kind of person would you like to be? Answer these in writing, and please be as specific as possible.

Why is this so important for change? It's critical because most of us grow up with a negative self-image. We use labels to describe everything and everyone. Most of our lives we've been told not to dream too big, take too big a risk or that success goes to the lucky or more fortunate. Nothing could be further from the truth. Success goes to those who are committed to changing themselves before circumstances force them to.

I have presidents, senior vice president and other high-level people go through this identity exercise during my workshops, and it's interesting to see what happens when labels are taken away. The pens often remain still for some time. We must define ourselves by our own values and not someone else's label.

The next step is to outline your purpose. What do you want for

your life in the next one, three, five, ten and perhaps twenty years? Write those things down and be as specific as possible. What actions are necessary to make your purpose come true? Purpose is stronger than object. True change is backed by a compelling reason to do so, and that's grounded in purpose. The cornerstones of purpose are reasons. What are your reasons for wanting to achieve your purpose? Are they personal, family, financial or spirit based? You must know this specifically.

Third, you must take massive action. I say if you look below you to find that the horse

that you're riding is dead . . .

DISMOUNT! The guy says, "Hey horse, Giddy-up!" I say, no, no, Giddy-off! That horse is dead! You must sometimes apply different actions to get a different result—or else nothing will change. If you one day find yourself in a hole, do yourself a favor and quit digging.

The fourth step involves evaluating your progress to see how you're doing. Who are you involved with? How are they affecting you? Is their influence positive or negative? Are you closer or further away from your desires? You must be willing to be harder on yourself than anyone ever could be. If you don't like what you see, you must immediately apply the fifth step.

The fifth step is a matter of choice as well. You must be willing to alter or change your course completely if necessary. This includes people too. If you find that your course of action is taking you further away from your new millenium resolutions rather than closer, I suggest that you eliminate those activities immediately, and replace them with more productive thought, energy, people and action.

The most important thing is to not wait until your pants are on fire! This requires consistently moving out of your comfort zone, which is where mediocre people love to hang out. Why? Because it feels good. There are three main reasons why the comfort zone is a dangerous place to be and they are volume, speed and complexity of change. The raw computing power of a microchip doubles every eighteen months; therefore, it is necessary for us to grow exponentially and give ourselves half a chance. What are you doing now to ensure your future success?

If you follow these guidelines, I can promise that you will see measurable results. This will allow you to look forward to the future with anticipation rather than apprehension and ensure that you are the master of change in your own life rather than a victim of circumstances. Remember the word LUCK means Labor Under Correct Knowledge. Happy New Year!

DESI WILLIAMSON, is the founder of Edina-based Impact! Seminars Unlimited Inc. He is a former scholar/athlete at the University of Minnesota, is a professional speaker, trainer and consultant who helps Fortune 500 companies, trade associations and civic organizations increase productivity through inspired people.

